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1870

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Abraham Lincoln U.S.A.; origins	1870—Third Republic of France; Charles Dickens dies 1871—Stanley searches for Livingstone 1872—Verdi writes <i>Aida</i>	1881—Germ theory of disease proved 1882—Charles Darwin dies; F.D. Roosevelt born 1883—Karl Marx dies 1884—Gladstone sponsors Third Reform Bill	1890—Sherman Antitrust Act 1892—Diesel engine 1894—Japanese war with China; Dreyfus case
Emancipation Proclamation U.S.A.	1862—Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation 1863—Gettysburg Address 1864—Vicksburg falls 1865—Civil War ends; Reconstruction begins	1861—American Civil War begins 1862—Mona Lisa stolen 1863—Great Exhibition opens in London 1864—Franco-Prussian War begins 1865—Abraham Lincoln assassinated	1860—Frederick Douglass publishes <i>The Liberator</i> 1861—First Transatlantic Cable completed 1862—Napier's Bone invented 1863—Photography used in court cases 1864—First artificial heart created 1865—First electric light bulb patented by Edison
Declaration of Independence U.S.A. Alaska Treaty of Berlin U.S.A. Mahatma Gandhi	1876—Bell invents the telephone 1878—Treaty of Berlin	1885—Pasteur cures rabies 1888—Matthew Arnold dies	1895—Marconi invents wireless 1897—Johannes Brahms dies 1898—Spanish-American War; discovery of radium 1899—Boer War

20 CENTURIES OF
GREAT PREACHING

VOLUME FOUR

NEWMAN

to

ROBERTSON

1801-1901

20 CENTURIES OF GREAT PREACHING

An Encyclopedia of Preaching

VOLUME FOUR

NEWMAN to ROBERTSON

1801-1901

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20 CENTURIES OF GREAT PREACHING. VOLUME FOUR:
NEWMAN TO ROBERTSON

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Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>Authorized</i>	<i>Douay</i>
Genesis	Gen.	Gen.
Exodus	Exod.	Exod.
Leviticus	Lev.	Lev.
Numbers	Num.	Num.
Deuteronomy	Deut.	Deut.
Joshua	Josh.	Josue
Judges	Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth	Ruth
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	1 Kings
2 Samuel	2 Sam.	2 Kings
1 Kings	1 Kings	3 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings	4 Kings
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.	1 Par.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.	2 Par.
Ezra	Ezra	1 Esdras
Nehemiah	Neh.	2 Esdras
Esther	Esther	Esther
Job	Job	Job
Psalms	Ps.	Ps.
Proverbs	Prov.	Prov.
Ecclesiastes	Eccles.	Eccles.
Song of Solomon	Song of Sol.	Cant.
Isaiah	Isa.	Isa.
Jeremiah	Jer.	Jer.
Lamentations	Lam.	Lam.
Ezekiel	Ezek.	Ezech.
Daniel	Dan.	Dan.
Hosea	Hos.	Osee
Joel	Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad.	Abdias
Jonah	Jon.	Jon.
Micah	Mic.	Mich.

<i>Old Testament</i>	<i>Authorized</i>	<i>Douay</i>
Nahum	Nah.	Nah.
Habakkuk	Hab.	Hab.
Zephaniah	Zeph.	Soph.
Haggai	Hag.	Aggeus
Zechariah	Zech.	Zach.
Malachi	Mal.	Mal.

<i>New Testament</i>	<i>Authorized and Douay</i>	<i>New Testament</i>	<i>Authorized and Douay</i>
Matthew	Matt.	1 Timothy	1 Tim.
Mark	Mark	2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philemon	Philem.
Acts of the Apostles	Acts	Hebrews	Heb.
Romans	Rom.	James	James
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.	1 Peter	1 Pet.
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.	2 Peter	2 Pet.
Galatians	Gal.	1 John	1 John
Ephesians	Eph.	2 John	2 John
Philippians	Phil.	3 John	3 John
Colossians	Col.	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.	Revelation	Rev. (Apoc.)
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.		

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NEWMAN
to
ROBERTSON
1801-1901

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

1801-1890



JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, The Mansell Collection

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

- 1801 *Born February 21 in London*
- 1816 *Experienced conversion and conviction that he was to lead a celibate life; entered Trinity College, Oxford*
- 1819 *Entered Lincoln's Inn to study law*
- 1823 *Won scholarship to Oriel College*
- 1824 *Ordained and began service as curate of St. Clements in Church of England at Oxford*
- 1828 *Made vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford*
- 1832 *Began journey to Italy and Mediterranean area*
- 1833 *Involved in Tractarian movement*
- 1845 *Determined to enter Roman Catholic church*
- 1846 *Ordained a priest in Roman Catholic church*
- 1852 *Helped found a Roman Catholic university in Ireland*
- 1864 *Involved in controversy with Kingsley*
- 1879 *Became a cardinal*
- 1890 *Died on August 11 in Birmingham*

WHEN NOT YET THIRTY YEARS OLD, John Henry Newman, a vicar in the Church of England, was the leading preacher at Oxford. Professors and students crowded to hear him. Colleges changed the time of meals in order not to conflict with the time of his sermons. Twenty years later the popular young English priest had become a Roman Catholic. Before his life was over he wore a cardinal's hat in the Church of Rome. In the long line of great British preachers, few have received the acclaim heaped upon Newman. Scottish Presbyterians, especially the Free Church variety, have never been known for their wide praise of Roman Catholic cardinals; yet Alexander Whyte, one

of the most famous Scottish Free Church preachers, again and again praised Cardinal Newman. On one occasion he said:

All students of the English language give their days and nights to the Authorized Version of the Bible, to Shakespeare, to Hooker, to Taylor, to Milton, to Bunyan, to Johnson, to Swift, to Ruskin. But if they overlook Newman, they will make a great mistake, and will miss both thinking and writing of the very first order. The strength, the richness, the pliability, the acuteness, the subtlety, the spiritualness, the beauty, the manifold resources of the English language, are all brought out under Newman's hand, as under the hand of no other English author. . . . The angel who has the guardianship of the English language committed to him, must surely have handed his own pen to Newman as often as that master has sat down to write English. No other writer in the English language has ever written it quite like Newman.¹

LIFE AND TIMES

Newman, born in London on February 21, 1801, grew up in a modestly prosperous home. His mother, a moderate Calvinist, trained her children in the faith of Protestantism. She directed the children to read such men as Thomas Scott, the great evangelical commentator, who deeply influenced the lives of her children. John was the oldest of the Newman children and displayed early in life the brilliance which was to characterize him. He nurtured a prolific imagination in general and religious fantasies in particular. In school Newman seldom participated in games or athletics; he was deeply studious. He experienced a significant religious conversion in his sixteenth year. As a mature man he described this conversion as follows:

I believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious (and of which I am still more certain than that I have hands and feet) would last into the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory.²

1. Alexander Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), p. 358.

2. Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1913), 1:30.

Again commenting on his conversion experience he said:

If I am asked why I believe in God, I answer that it is because I believe in myself, for I feel it impossible to believe in my own existence (and of that fact I am sure) without believing also in the existence of Him, who lives as a Personal, All-seeing, All-judging Being in my conscience.³

Shortly after his conversion experience he reached the conclusion that he should lead a celibate life, a conclusion based upon the conviction that it was God's will. When he was twenty-eight years old, he definitely committed himself to a celibate life.

He entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1816. He found the wine parties and most other social events offensive and refused to participate. While he did not excel in partying, he did in studying. Through a series of scholarships which he won he was able to stay in school, in spite of the financial setbacks suffered by his father.

Like many other great preachers, Newman started out vocationally in the direction of law. Entering Lincoln's Inn in 1819 to study law, he soon found the study irksome; increasingly he leaned toward the ministry. Finally he determined that he should be a minister. After completing theological training, he was ordained in the Church of England and began service as a curate of St. Clements at Oxford. Four years later, in 1828, he became vicar of St. Mary's at Oxford. Though only in his late twenties, he immediately became an influence in Oxford. Gladstone, a student at Oxford at the time, was deeply influenced by him.

With a friend, Newman took a journey to Italy and to the Mediterranean area for a vacation in 1832. He found the religion of Rome at that time to be, in his words, "a wretched perversion of the truth." On the way home, he became seriously ill. Those with him feared for his life. Newman, however, insisted that he would live. From this crisis he gained a definite conviction that there was work for him to do in England for God. On the way back to England from this trying experience, he penned the lines of the great hymn "Lead, Kindly Light."

Back in England, he once again took up his duties at St. Mary's. The success which he enjoyed at such an early age

3. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

might have ruined a lesser man. The congregations, which met in the afternoon, numbered probably two or three times the whole population of the parish. Testimonies of students from these days indicate that single sermons changed whole careers.

Social and religious forces were gathering at this time which would alter Newman's own career. Secularism and liberalism gained increasing favor, and Newman felt compelled to counter-attack. Further, the state was gaining more and more power and the church was losing influence. Throughout the Church of England spiritual lethargy was widespread. A serious cleavage developed between the high churchmen and the evangelicals. Newman, fearing that the evangelicals were unknowingly playing into the hands of the liberals, sided with the high churchmen.

With several other churchmen of high church persuasion, he began to write a series of tracts to strengthen the position and authority of the Church of England. This effort became known as the Tractarian movement. The tracts endeavored to establish several things, including the proof of the apostolic succession in the Anglican church. There were ninety tracts in all, and Newman authored twenty-seven of them; his received the widest readership. The tracts created a hot controversy in the Church of England. Finally the bishop of Oxford forbade their continuance. But the movement could not be stopped by order of the bishop. Hundreds of clergymen had been attracted to the Tractarian movement.

In 1841 *Tract Ninety* was published. It was strongly pro-Catholic and resulted in Newman's being placed under the ban of the Church of England. Newman gave up his editorship of the *British Critic*, the chief organ of Tractarianism, withdrew from Oxford, and went into a period of seclusion. During this time he retracted the severe language which he had earlier directed against the Church of Rome; he also began to reconsider doubts which he had concerning the Catholic church. Ultimately these doubts vanished, and in 1845 he entered the Catholic church. In conjunction with this decision he wrote his sister:

I must tell you what will pain you greatly, but I will make it as short as you would wish me to. This night Father Dominic, the Passionist, sleeps here. He does not know of my intention: but I shall ask him to receive

me into what I believe to be the One Fold of the Redeemer. This will not go til all is over. Ever yours affectionately, John H. Newman.⁴

The following year he was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic church, given the D.D. degree, and sent back to England from Rome to further the Catholic cause in his own country. In the Roman Catholic church Newman was an Oratorian, that is, a member of a congregation of secular priests. Secular priests were those who had taken no vows, who retained their patrimony, and who contributed to the upkeep of the oratory in which they lived as a community. He did not gain immediate recognition in the Catholic church; many Catholics mistrusted him. Yet largely through his influence over two hundred clergy from the Church of England entered the Church of Rome between 1845 and 1862.

In 1852 he was asked to found a Roman Catholic university in Ireland. At this task he worked diligently but with little success. It seems that his basically introverted nature and sensitive spirit had prepared him little for the role of an institutional head. For the next several years he suffered a frustrating lack of direction. Though brilliant in preaching and writing, he gained little ascendancy in the Catholic church. He insisted—and his biographers agree—that he had no high ecclesiastical ambitions. Yet he did desire a place from which to speak with influence to help turn the tide of liberalism and irreligion in England.

In 1864 a controversy between Newman and Charles Kingsley erupted. Kingsley, in a review of Froude's *History of England*, published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, had indicated that Newman used lies as a technique to advance the cause of the Catholic church. Newman protested that this was untrue. He refused to sue Kingsley, possibly because of his own sad experience in a lawsuit several years before: as a result of remarks Newman had made, a renegade Roman priest had sued him for 12,000 pounds and had won. This case cost Newman not only financially but also emotionally. After an exchange of letters, Newman wrote a religious autobiography, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, which defended his personal integrity. This book won for

4. Anne Mozley, ed., *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1891), p. 468.

him wide sympathy among his countrymen and ushered in a period of popularity, acceptance, and influence for Newman.

By 1875 Newman was again floundering in a frustrated state; he was intensely sensitive and suffered more miserably than a less thin-skinned person would have suffered. Neglect, misunderstanding, and verbal abuse all took their toll. Had he died during this period, his life might have been written off as a total tragedy. Toward the end of his life he again entangled himself in controversy: he opposed the Vatican Council's proposal of a decree of papal infallibility. Once the decree was issued, however, he defended it. One of those who attacked the decree most intensely was Gladstone, who had sat as a youth under Newman's preaching in Oxford. Newman answered Gladstone in spirited writing.

When Pope Pius IX died, Leo XIII became pope and made Newman a cardinal. Unless connected with a charge, cardinals were supposed to reside in Rome. Because of Newman's age a special ruling was issued to cover his case and he was allowed to continue to live in Birmingham. He died in 1890, on August 11, in Birmingham, having enjoyed his cardinalship for eleven years.

Anyone living as unorthodox a life as Newman could not hope to escape criticism. Numerous critics pounced on Newman. As an ascetic and a celibate, he was accused by some of being too churchly and harsh. As a dogmatist, he was charged with being fanatically attached to authority; even his own brother insisted that he lacked balance. A sister claimed that at times he was arrogant. Many felt that he was self-deceived. He tended to be secretive, supersensitive, and withdrawn.

Yet none disputed that he was a man who took life seriously, who was guided by his own sense of principle, and who was devoted to the cause of the Christian faith with unreserved zeal. The tender lines from his great hymn give insight into his life—a struggle through opposition and darkness toward what he sensed was God's will:

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead, thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead, thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Gladstone, who was an undergraduate in Oxford during the time Newman was preaching there, recorded his impressions of Newman's preaching:

Without ostentation or effort, but by simple excellence, he was constantly drawing undergraduates more and more around him. Now Dr. Newman's manner in the pulpit was one about which, if you considered it in its separate parts, you would arrive at very unsatisfactory conclusions. There was not very much change in the inflection of the voice; action there was none. His sermons were read, and his eyes were always bent on his book.

But you must take the man as a whole, and there was a stamp and a seal upon him; there was a solemn sweetness and music in the tone; there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and with the manner, which made even his delivery . . . singularly attractive.⁵

Newman's preaching was subtle, quiet, and restrained. Those who heard him spoke of a great intensity and emotional undertone to his remarks, always delivered quietly and with great restraint. His appearance added to the effect: he was tall, slightly stooped, with a face that caused many to think of Julius Caesar — except that Newman's features were sharper. James Anthony Froude, himself an undergraduate at Oxford, first compared Newman's appearance to that of Caesar:

In both there was an original force of character which refused to be molded by circumstances, which was to make its own way, and become a power in the world; a clearness of intellectual perception, a disdain for conventionalities, a temper imperious and wilful, but along with it a most attaching gentleness, sweetness, singleness of heart and purpose.⁶

One contemporary said that Newman's effect on the undergraduates was as impressive out of the pulpit as in it: "Light-

5. Richard H. Hutton, *Cardinal Newman* (London: Methuen & Co., 1891), pp. 97-98.

6. James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, vol. 4 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1886), p. 273.

hearted undergraduates would drop their voices and whisper, 'There's Newman,' when, head thrust forward, and gaze fixed upon some vision seen only by himself, with swift, noiseless step, he glided by."⁷

Newman preached just as he walked: swiftly and quietly, the effect heightened by pauses interspersed among his rapid sentences. There was a Caesar-like confidence about his preaching, too, a polemical style given to dogmatic statements.

Although the beauty of his English prose and the majesty of his eloquence have received virtually unanimous praise from both his contemporaries and modern critics, his scriptural exposition has not fared as well. In exegesis he was untrained; at times his use of the Scripture, particularly the supportive use of Scripture in the body of the sermon, is almost incredible. No doubt much of the criticism during his lifetime about his use of the Bible was motivated by his conversion to the Catholic faith. But even in those passages of his sermons where no dogmatic issues are involved, his scriptural applications are loose at best. Alexander Whyte, in his thoroughgoing appreciation for Newman, nonetheless took exception to the biblical nature of Newman's preaching:

Looked at as pure literature Newman's St. Mary's sermons are not far from absolute perfection; but looked at as pulpit work, as preaching the gospel, they are full of the most serious, and even fatal defects. With all their genius, with all their truly noble and enthralling characteristics, they are not, properly speaking, New Testament preaching at all.⁸

On the other hand, at times Newman devoted several pages of a sermon to a thorough examination of the historical background of his text in an excellent manner. Many of his biblical illustrations are pertinent and helpful.

Whatever Newman's skill as a biblical expositor, the purity of his style—by more recent standards, archaic and tedious—was almost universally praised in his day as a model of eloquence. Dean Church, a disciple of Newman and himself a preacher of unusual ability, gave this account of Newman's sermons:

7. Ward, *Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, 1:64.

8. Alexander Whyte, *Newman: An Appreciation* (London: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1901), p. 90.

Even people who heard them continually, and felt them to be different from any other sermons, hardly estimated their real power, or knew at the time the influence which the sermons were having upon them. Plain, direct, unornamented, clothed in English that was only pure and lucid, free from any faults of taste, strong in their flexibility and perfect command both of language and thought, they were the expression of a piercing and large insight into character and conscience and motives, of a sympathy at once most tender and most stern with the tempted and the wavering, of an absolute and burning faith in God and His counsels, in His love, in His judgments, in the awful glory of his generosity and his magnificence. They made men think of the things which the preacher spoke of, and not of the sermon or the preacher.⁹

Froude added to our knowledge of Newman's preaching as he described the impact of one of his sermons:

Newman described closely some of the incidents of our Lord's passion; he then paused. For a few moments there was a breathless silence. Then, in a low, clear voice, of which the faintest vibration was audible in the farthest corner of St. Mary's, he said, "Now, I bid you recollect that he to whom these things were done was Almighty God." It was as if an electric stroke had gone through the church, as if every person present understood for the first time the meaning of what he had all his life been saying. I suppose it was an epoch in the mental history of more than one of my Oxford contemporaries.¹⁰

Newman's style changed as his life unfolded. His university sermons bear the marks of those days of inner struggle and religious conflict. In the early days of his preaching he preached from a full manuscript, staring down at the page and speaking with little emotion. But after his religious battles had been settled in his own mind, Newman preached with increasing power and freedom: his first sermons as a Roman Catholic reveal a change in his method of preaching as well as in his choice of a church. He spoke more freely and with increasing

9. R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1900), pp. 129-30.

10. Froude, p. 286.

emotion, using only few notes. Wilfrid Ward said of Newman's spiritual pilgrimage:

The style faithfully reflects the journey of his mind in its various stages. The austere severity of his earlier and more tentative inquiries gave place to the peculiar beauty and persuasiveness of his presentment of the vistas which gradually opened out before his mind as time went on . . . and the style varied as the shape of his own experience changed.¹¹

Brastow, a contemporary of Newman, evaluated the strengths of his preaching:

Three things impress us. First, the directness of the address. He gets to work promptly, drives straight at his mark, and closes with direct appeal. . . . The fulness and the free flow of the thought is another feature. No loose verbiage, no padding, no hard pressure upon the homiletic pump. . . . And then there is the progressive movement of the thought. It is not closely articulated, nor definitely outlined, but it moves rapidly onward to its goal. He has mastered his thought and he holds it freely in its relations.¹²

The sermons of Newman show little homiletical organization. There are no real divisions within the sermon, only numbered paragraphs to mark off the steps of his thought. Within these numbered paragraphs the outline of his sermon can sometimes be traced from introduction to conclusion, but in most of his discourses there is no careful paragraphing and little formal division. Nevertheless, the greatness of his thinking cannot be hidden by these flaws. All of the sermons in this study reveal the preaching gifts of a most significant figure in the churches of England, both Protestant and Catholic.¹³

11. Wilfrid Ward, *Last Lectures of Wilfrid Ward* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1918), p. 49.

12. Lewis O. Brastow, *Representative Modern Preachers* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1904), p. 305.

13. For a complete statement by Newman on his philosophy of preaching, see J. H. Newman, "University Preaching," *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1859), pp. 187–220.

Sermons

SAUL

“I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath” (Hosea 13:11).

THE ISRAELITES seem to have asked for a king from an unthankful caprice and waywardness. The ill conduct, indeed, of Samuel’s sons was the occasion of the sin, but “an evil heart of unbelief,” to use Scripture language, was the real cause of it. They had ever been restless and dissatisfied, asking for flesh when they had manna, fretful for water, impatient of the wilderness, bent on returning to Egypt, fearing their enemies, murmuring against Moses. They had miracles even to satiety; and then, for a change, they wished a king like the nations. This was the chief reason of their sinful demand. And further, they were dazzled with the pomp and splendour of the heathen monarchs around them, and they desired someone to fight their battles, some visible succour to depend on, instead of having to wait for an invisible Providence, which came in its own way and time, by little and little, being dispensed silently, or tardily, or (as they might consider) unsuitably. Their carnal hearts did not love the neighbourhood of heaven; and, like the inhabitants of Gadara afterwards, they prayed that Almighty God would depart from their coasts.

Such were some of the feelings under which they desired a king like the nations; and God at length granted their request. To punish them, He gave them a king *after their own heart*, Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; of whom the text speaks in these terms, “I gave them a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath.”

There is, in true religion, a sameness, an absence of hue and brilliancy, in the eyes of the natural man; a plainness, austereness, and (what he considers) sadness. It is like the heavenly manna of which the Israelites complained, insipid, and at length wearisome, “like wafers made with honey.” They complained that “their soul was dried away”: “There is nothing at all,” they said, “beside this manna, before

Reprinted from John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 8 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1901), 3:29–43.

our eyes. . . . We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." Such were the dainty meats in which their soul delighted; and for the same reason they desired a king. Samuel had too much of primitive simplicity about him to please them, they felt they were behind the world, and clamoured to be put on a level with the heathen.

Saul, the king whom God gave them, had much to recommend him to minds thus greedy of the dust of the earth. He was brave, daring, resolute; gifted, too, with strength of body as well as of mind—a circumstance which seems to have attracted their admiration. He is described in person as if one of those sons of Anak, before whose giant-forms the spies of the Israelites in the wilderness were as grasshoppers—"a choice young man, and a goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Both his virtues and his faults were such as became an eastern monarch, and were adapted to secure the fear and submission of his subjects. Pride, haughtiness, obstinacy, reserve, jealousy, caprice—these, in their way, were not unbecoming qualities in the king after whom their imaginations roved. On the other hand, the better parts of his character were of an excellence sufficient to engage the affection of Samuel himself.

As to Samuel, his conduct is far above human praise. Though injuriously treated by his countrymen, who cast him off after he had served them faithfully till he was "old and gray-headed," and who resolved on setting over themselves a king against his earnest entreaties, still we find no trace of coldness or jealousy in his behaviour towards Saul. On his first meeting with him, he addressed him in the words of loyalty—"On whom is all the desire of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?" Afterwards, when he anointed him king, he "kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance?" When he announced him to the people as their king, he said, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" And, some time after, when Saul had irrecoverably lost God's favour, we are told, "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: *nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul.*" In the next chapter he is even rebuked for immoderate grief—"How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" Such sorrow speaks favourably for Saul as well as for Samuel; it is not only the grief of a loyal subject and a zealous prophet, but, moreover, of an attached friend; and, indeed, instances are recorded, in the first years of his reign, of forbearance, generosity, and neglect of self, which sufficiently account for the feelings with which Samuel regarded him. David, under very different circumstances, seems to have felt for him a similar affection.

The higher points of his character are brought out in instances such

as the following: — The first announcement of his elevation came upon him suddenly, but apparently without unsettling him. He kept it secret, leaving it to Samuel, who had made it to him, to publish it. "Saul said unto his uncle, He" (that is, Samuel) "told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, *he told him not.*" Nay, it would even seem he was averse to the dignity intended for him; for when the Divine lot fell upon him, he hid himself, and was not discovered by the people, without recourse to Divine assistance. The appointment was at first unpopular. "The children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? They despised him, and brought him no presents, *but he held his peace.*" Soon the Ammonites invaded the country beyond Jordan, with the avowed intention of subjugating it. The people sent to Saul for relief almost in despair; and the panic spread in the interior as well as among those whose country was immediately threatened. The history proceeds: — "*Behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field;* and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? and they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul, and his anger was kindled greatly." His order for an immediate gathering throughout Israel was obeyed with the alacrity with which the multitude serve the strong-minded in times of danger. A decisive victory over the enemy followed; then the popular cry became, "Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, *There shall not a man be put to death this day,* for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

Thus personally qualified, Saul was, moreover, a prosperous king. He had been appointed to subdue the enemies of Israel, and success attended his arms. At the end of the fourteenth chapter, we read, "So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them. And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them."

Such was Saul's character and success; his character faulty, yet not without promise; his success in arms as great as his carnal subjects could have desired. Yet, in spite of Samuel's private liking for him, and in spite of the good fortune which actually attended him, we find that from the beginning the prophet's voice is raised both against people and king in warnings and rebukes, which are omens of his destined destruction, according to the text, "I gave them a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath." At the very time that Saul is publicly received as king, Samuel protests, "Ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations." In a subsequent assembly of the people, in which he testified his uprightness, he says, "Is it not wheat-harvest

today? I will call unto the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain; that ye *may perceive and see that your wickedness is great*, in asking you a king." Again, "If ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." And after this, on the first instance of disobedience, and at first sight no very heinous sin, the sentence of rejection is passed upon him: "Thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart."

Here, then, a question may be raised—Why was Saul thus marked for vengeance from the beginning? Why these presages of misfortune, which from the first hung over him, gathered, fell in storm and tempest, and at length overwhelmed him? Is his character so essentially faulty that it must be thus distinguished for reprobation above all the anointed kings after him? Why, while David is called a man after God's own heart, should Saul be put aside as worthless?

This question leads us to a deeper inspection of his character. Now, we know, the first duty of every man is the fear of God—a reverence for His word, a love of Him, and a desire to obey Him; and, besides, it was peculiarly incumbent on the king of Israel, as God's vicegerent, by virtue of his office, to promote His glory whom his subjects had rejected.

Now Saul "lacked this one thing." His character, indeed, is obscure, and we must be cautious while considering it; still, as Scripture is given us for our instruction, it is surely right to make the most of what we find there, and to form our judgment by such lights as we possess. It would appear, then, that Saul was never under the abiding influence of religion, or, in Scripture language, "the fear of God," however he might be at times moved and softened. Some men are inconsistent in their conduct, as Samson; or as Eli, in a different way; and yet may have lived by faith, though a weak faith. Others have sudden falls, as David had. Others are corrupted by prosperity, as Solomon. But as to Saul, there is no proof that he had any deep-seated religious principle at all; rather, it is to be feared, that his history is a lesson to us, that the "heart of unbelief" may exist in the very sight of God, may rule a man in spite of many natural advantages of character, in the midst of much that is virtuous, amiable, and commendable.

Saul, it would seem, was naturally brave, active, generous, and patient; and what nature made him, such he remained, that is, without improvement; with virtues which had no value, because they required no effort, and implied the influence of no principle. On the other hand, when we look for evidence of his faith, that is, his practical sense of things unseen, we discover instead a deadness to all considerations not connected with the present world. It is his habit to treat prophet and priest with a coldness, to say the least, which seems to argue some great internal defect. It would not be inconsistent with the Scripture account of him, even should the real fact be, that (with some general notions concerning the being and providence of God) he doubted of

the divinity of the Dispensation of which he was an instrument. The circumstance which first introduces him to the inspired history is not in his favour. While in search of his father's asses, which were lost, he came to the city where Samuel was; and though Samuel was now an old man, and from childhood known as the especial minister and prophet of the God of Israel, Saul seems to have considered him as a mere diviner, such as might be found among the heathen, who, for "the fourth part of a shekel of silver," would tell him his way.

The narrative goes on to mention, that after his leaving Samuel "God gave him another heart," and on meeting a company of prophets, "the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them." Upon this, "all that knew him beforetime" said, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish: is Saul also among the prophets? . . . therefore it became a proverb." From this narrative we gather, that his carelessness and coldness in religious matters were so notorious, that, in the eyes of his acquaintance, there was a certain strangeness and incongruity, which at once struck the mind, in his being associated with a school of the prophets.

Nor have we any reason to believe, from the after history, that the divine gift, then first imparted, left any religious effect upon his mind. At a later period of his life we find him suddenly brought under the same sacred influence on his entering the school where Samuel taught; but, instead of softening him, its effect upon his outward conduct did but testify the fruitlessness of divine grace when acting upon a will obstinately set upon evil.

The immediate occasion of his rejection was his failing under a specific trial of his obedience, as set before him at the very time he was anointed. He had collected with difficulty an army against the Philistines: while waiting for Samuel to offer the sacrifice, his people became dispirited, and began to fall off and return home. Here he was doubtless exposed to the temptation of taking unlawful measures to put a stop to their defection. But when we consider that the act to which he was persuaded was no less than that of his offering sacrifice—he being neither priest nor prophet, nor having any commission thus to interfere with the Mosaic ritual—it is plain "*his forcing himself*" to do so (as he tenderly described his sin) was a direct profaneness—a profaneness which implied that he was careless about forms, which in this world will ever be essential to things supernatural, and thought it mattered little whether he acted in God's way or in his own.

After this, he seems to have separated himself from Samuel, whom he found unwilling to become his instrument, and to have had recourse to the priesthood instead. Ahijah or Ahimelech (as he is afterwards called), the high priest, followed his camp; and the ark too, in spite of the warning conveyed by the disasters which attended the presumptuous use of it in the time of Eli. "And Saul said unto Ahijah,

Bring hither the ark of God"; while it was brought, a tumult which was heard in the camp of the Philistines, increased. On this interruption Saul irreverently put the ark aside, and went out to the battle.

It will be observed, that there was no professed or intentional irreverence in Saul's conduct; he was still on the whole the same he had ever been. He outwardly respected the Mosaic ritual—about this time he built his first altar to the Lord, and in a certain sense seemed to acknowledge God's authority. But nothing shows he considered that there was any vast distinction between Israel and the nations around them. He was *indifferent*, and cared for none of these things. The chosen people desired a king like the nations, and such a one they received.

After this he was commanded to "go and smite the sinners, the Amalekites, and utterly destroy them and their cattle." This was a judgment on them which God had long decreed, though He had delayed it; and He now made Saul the minister of His vengeance. But Saul performed it so far only as fell in with his own inclination and purposes. He smote, indeed, the Amalekites, and "destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword"—this exploit had its glory; the best of the flocks and herds he spared, and why? to sacrifice therewith to the Lord. But since God had expressly told him to destroy them, what was this but to imply, that divine intimations had nothing to do with such matters? what was it but to consider that the established religion was but a useful institution, or a splendid pageant suitable to the dignity of monarchy, but resting on no unseen supernatural sanction? Certainly he in no sense acted in the fear of God, with the wish to please Him, and the conviction that he was in His sight. One might consider it mere pride and wilfulness in him, acting in his own way because it was his own (which doubtless it was in great measure), except that he appears to have had an eye to the feelings and opinions of men as to his conduct, though not to God's judgment. He "feared the people and obeyed their voice." Again, he spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Doubtless he considered Agag as "his brother," as Ahab afterwards called Ben-hadad. Agag was a king, and Saul observed towards him that courtesy and clemency which earthly monarchs observe one towards another, and rightly, when no divine command comes in the way. But the God of Israel required a king after His own heart, jealous of idolatry; the people had desired a king like the nations around them.

It is remarkable, moreover, that while he spared Agag, he attempted to exterminate the Gibeonites with the sword, who were tolerated in Israel by virtue of an oath taken in their favour by Joshua and "the princes of the congregation." This he did "*in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.*"

From the time of his disobedience in the matter of Amalek, Samuel came no more to see Saul, whose season of probation was over. The evil spirit exerted a more visible influence upon him; and God sent

Samuel to anoint David privately, as the future king of Israel. I need not trace further the course of moral degradation which is exemplified in Saul's subsequent history. Mere natural virtue wears away, when men neglect to deepen it into religious principle. Saul appears in his youth to be unassuming and forbearing; in advanced life he is not only proud and gloomy (as he ever was in a degree), but cruel, resentful, and hard-hearted, which he was not in his youth. His injurious treatment of David is a long history; but his conduct to Ahimelech, the high priest, admits of being mentioned here. Ahimelech assisted David in his escape. Saul resolved on the death of Ahimelech and all his father's house. On his guards refusing to execute his command, Doeg, a man of Edom, one of the nations which Saul was raised up to withstand, undertook the atrocious deed. On that day, eighty-five priests were slain. Afterwards Nob, the city of the priests, was smitten with the edge of the sword, and all destroyed, "men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep." That is, Saul executed more complete vengeance on the descendants of Levi, the sacred tribe, than on the sinners, the Amalekites, who laid wait for Israel in the way, on their going up from Egypt.

Last of all, he finishes his bad history by an open act of apostasy from the God of Israel. His last act is like his first, but more significant. He began, as we saw, by consulting Samuel as a diviner; this showed the direction of his mind. It steadily persevered in its evil way—and he ends by consulting a professed sorceress at Endor. The Philistines had assembled their hosts; Saul's heart trembled greatly—he had no advisers or comforters; Samuel was dead—the priests he had himself slain with the sword. He hoped, by magic rites, which he had formerly denounced, to foresee the issue of the approaching battle. God meets him even in the cave of Satanic delusions—but as an Antagonist. The reprobate king receives, by the mouth of dead Samuel, who had once anointed him, the news that he is to be "taken away in God's wrath"—that the Lord would deliver Israel, with him, into the hands of the Philistines, and that on the morrow he and his sons should be numbered with the dead.

The next day "the battle went sore against him, the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers." "Anguish came upon him," and he feared to fall into the hands of the uncircumcised. He desired his armour-bearer to draw his sword and thrust him through therewith. On his refusing, he fell upon his own sword, and so came to his end.

Unbelief and wilfulness are the wretched characteristics of Saul's history—an ear deaf to the plainest commands, a heart hardened against the most gracious influences. Do not suppose, my brethren, because I speak thus strongly, I consider Saul's state of mind to be something very unusual. God forbid it should exist in its full misery anywhere among us! but surely there is not any one soul here present but what may trace in itself the elements of sins like his. Let us only

reflect on our hardness of heart when attending religious ordinances, and we shall understand something of Saul's condition when he prophesied. We may be conscious to ourselves of the truth of things sacred as entirely as if we saw them; we may have no misgivings about the presence of God in Church, or about the grace of the Sacraments, and yet we often feel in as ordinary and as unconcerned a mood as if we were altogether unbelievers. Again, let us reflect on our callousness after mercies received, or after suffering. We are often in worse case even than this; for to realize the unseen world in our imagination, and feel as if we saw it, may not always be in our power. But what shall be said to wilful transgression of God's commandments, such as most of us, I fear, must recollect in ourselves, even as children, when our hearts were most tender, when we least doubted about religion, were least perplexed in matters of duty, and had all the while a full consciousness of what we were doing? What, again, shall be said to those, perhaps not few in number, who sin with the purpose beforehand of repenting afterwards?

What makes our insensibility still more alarming is, that it follows the grant of the highest privileges. Saul was hardened after the Spirit of God had come on him; ours is a sin after Baptism. There is something awful in this, if we understood it; as if that peculiar hardness of heart which we experience, in spite of whatever excellences of character we may otherwise possess, like Saul— in spite of the benevolence, or fairness, or candour, or consideration, which are the virtues of this age—was the characteristic of a soul transgressing after it had “tasted the powers of the world to come,” and an earnest of the second death. May this thought, through God's mercy, rouse us to a deeper seriousness than we have at present, while Christ still continues to intercede for us, and grants us time for repentance!

PROMISING WITHOUT DOING

“A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and

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said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir; and went not" (Matthew 21:28-30).

OUR RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONS are at a far greater distance from our acting upon them, than we ourselves are aware. We know generally that it is our duty to serve God, and we resolve we will do so faithfully. We are sincere in thus generally desiring and purposing to be obedient, and we think we are in earnest; yet we go away, and presently, without any struggle of mind or apparent change of purpose, almost without knowing ourselves what we do—we go away and do the very contrary to the resolution we have expressed. This inconsistency is exposed by our Blessed Lord in the second part of the parable which I have taken for my text. You will observe, that in the case of the first son, who said he would not go work, and yet did go, it is said, "afterward he repented"; he underwent a positive change of purpose. But in the case of the second, it is merely said, "he answered, I go, Sir; and went not"; for here there was *no* revolution of sentiment, nothing deliberate; he merely acted according to his habitual frame of mind; he did *not* go work, because it was contrary to his general character to work; only he did not know this. He said, "I go, Sir," sincerely, from the feeling of the moment; but when the words were out of his mouth, then they were forgotten. It was like the wind blowing against a stream, which seems for a moment to change its course in consequence, but in fact flows down as before.

To this subject I shall now call your attention, as drawn from the latter part of this parable, passing over the case of the repentant son, which would form a distinct subject in itself. "He answered and said, I go, Sir; and went not." We promise to serve God: we do not perform; and that not from deliberate faithlessness in the particular case, but because it is our nature, our *way* not to obey, and *we* do not know this; we do not know ourselves, or what we are promising. I will give several instances of this kind of weakness.

1. For instance; that of mistaking good feelings for real religious principle. Consider how often this takes place. It is the case with the young necessarily, who have not been exposed to temptation. They have (we will say) been brought up religiously, they wish to be religious, and so are objects of our love and interest; but they think themselves far more religious than they really are. They suppose they hate sin, and understand the Truth, and can resist the world, when they hardly know the meaning of the words they use. Again, how often is a man incited by circumstances to utter a virtuous wish, or propose a generous or valiant deed, and perhaps applauds himself for his own good feeling, and has no suspicion that he is not able to act upon it! In truth, he does not understand where the real difficulty of his duty lies.

He thinks that the characteristic of a religious man is his having correct notions. It escapes him that there is a great interval between feeling and acting. He takes it for granted he can do what he wishes. He knows he is a free agent, and can on the whole do what he will; but he is not conscious of the load of corrupt nature and sinful habits which hang upon his will, and clog it in each particular exercise of it. He has borne these so long, that he is insensible to their existence. He knows that in little things, where passion and inclination are excluded, he can perform as soon as he resolves. Should he meet in his walk two paths, to the right and left, he is sure he can take which he will at once, without any difficulty; and he fancies that obedience to God is not much more difficult than to turn to the right instead of the left.

2. One especial case of this self-deception is seen in delaying repentance. A man says to himself, "Of course, if the worst comes to the worst, if illness comes, or at least old age, I can repent." I do not speak of the dreadful presumption of such a mode of quieting conscience (though many persons really use it who do not speak the words out, or are aware that they act upon it), but, merely, of the ignorance it evidences concerning our moral condition, and our power of willing and doing. If men can repent, why do they not do so at once? they answer, that "they intend to do so hereafter"; i. e. they do *not* repent because they *can*. Such is their argument; whereas, the very fact that they do not now, should make them suspect that there is a greater difference between intending and doing than they know of.

So very difficult is obedience, so hardly won is every step in our Christian course, so sluggish and inert our corrupt nature, that I would have a man disbelieve he can do one jot or tittle beyond what he has already done; refrain from borrowing aught on the hope of the future, however good a security for it he seems to be able to show; and never take his good feelings and wishes in pledge for one single untried deed. Nothing but *past* acts are the vouchers for *future*. Past sacrifices, past labours, past victories over yourselves, — these, my brethren, are the tokens of the like in store, and doubtless of greater in store; for the path of the just is as the shining, growing light. But trust nothing short of these. "Deeds, not words and wishes," this must be the watchword of your warfare and the ground of your assurance. But if you have done nothing firm and manly hitherto, if you are as yet the coward slave of Satan, and the poor creature of your lusts and passions, never suppose you will one day rouse yourselves from your indolence. Alas! there are men who walk the road to hell, always the while looking back at heaven, and trembling as they pace forward towards their place of doom. They hasten on as under a spell, shrinking from the consequences of their own deliberate doings. Such was Balaam. What would he have given if words and feelings might have passed for deeds! See how religious he was so far as profession goes!

How did he revere God in speech! How piously express a desire to die the death of the righteous! Yet he died in battle among God's *enemies*; not suddenly overcome by temptation, only on the other hand, not suddenly turned to God by his good thoughts and fair purposes. But in this respect the power of sin differs from any literal spell or fascination, that we are, after all, willing slaves of it, and shall answer for following it. If "our iniquities, like the wind, take us away," yet we can help this.

Nor is it only among beginners in religious obedience that there is this great interval between promising and performing. We can never answer how we shall act under new circumstances. A very little knowledge of life and of our own hearts will teach us this. Men whom we meet in the world turn out, in the course of their trial, so differently from what their former conduct promised, they view things so differently *before* they were tempted and *after*, that we, who see and wonder at it, have abundant cause to look to ourselves, not to be "high-minded," but to "fear." Even the most matured saints, those who imbibed in largest measure the power and fullness of Christ's Spirit, and worked righteousness most diligently in their day, could they have been thoroughly scanned even by man, would (I am persuaded) have exhibited inconsistencies such as to surprise and shock their most ardent disciples. After all, one good deed is scarcely the pledge of another, though I just now said it was. The best men are uncertain; they are great, and they are little again; they stand firm, and then fall. Such is human virtue;—reminding us to call no one master on earth, but to look up to our sinless and perfect Lord; reminding us to humble ourselves, each within himself, and to reflect what we must appear to God, if even to ourselves and each other we seem so base and worthless; and showing clearly that all who are saved, even the least inconsistent of us, can be saved only by faith, not by works.

3. Here I am reminded of another plausible form of the same error. It is a mistake concerning what is meant by faith. We know Scripture tells us that God accepts those who have faith in Him. Now the question is, What *is* faith, and how can a man tell that he *has* faith? Some persons answer at once and without hesitation, that "to have faith is to feel oneself to be nothing, and God everything; it is to be convinced of sin, to be conscious one cannot save oneself, and to wish to be saved by Christ our Lord; and that it is, moreover, to have the love of Him warm in one's heart, and to rejoice in Him, to desire His glory, and to resolve to live to Him and not to the world." But I will answer, with all due seriousness, as speaking on a serious subject, that this is *not* faith. Not that it is not necessary (it is very necessary) to be convinced that we are laden with infirmity and sin, and without health in us, and to look for salvation solely to Christ's blessed sacrifice on the cross; and we may well be thankful if we are thus minded; but that a man may

feel all this that I have described, vividly, and still not yet possess one particle of true religious faith. Why? Because there is an immeasurable distance between feeling right and doing right. A man may have all these good thoughts and emotions, yet (if he has not yet hazarded them to the experiment of practice) he cannot promise himself that he has any sound and permanent principle at all. If he has not yet acted upon them, we have no voucher, barely on *account* of them, to believe that they are anything but words. Though a man spoke like an angel, I would not believe him, on the mere ground of his speaking. Nay, till he acts upon them, he has not even evidence to himself that he has true living faith. Dead faith (as St. James says) profits no man. Of course; the Devils have it. What, on the other hand is *living* faith? Do fervent thoughts make faith *living*? St. James tells us otherwise. He tells us *works*, deeds of obedience, are the life of faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." So that those who think they really believe, because they have in word and thought surrendered themselves to God, are much too hasty in their judgment. They have done something, indeed, but not at all the most difficult part of their duty, which is to surrender themselves to God in deed and act. They have as yet done nothing to show they will not, after saying "I go," the next moment "go not"; nothing to show they will not act the part of the self-deceiving disciple, who said, "Though I die with Thee, I will not deny Thee," yet straightway went and denied Christ thrice. As far as we know anything of the matter, justifying faith has no existence independent of its particular definite acts. It may be described to be the temper under which men obey; the humble and earnest desire to please Christ which causes and attends on actual services. He who does one little deed of obedience, whether he denies himself some comfort to relieve the sick and needy, or curbs his temper, or forgives an enemy, or asks forgiveness for an offence committed by him, or resists the clamour or ridicule of the world—such an one (as far as we are given to judge) evinces more true faith than could be shown by the most fluent religious conversation, the most intimate knowledge of Scripture doctrine, or the most remarkable agitation and change of religious sentiments. Yet how many are there who sit still with folded hands, dreaming, doing nothing at all, thinking they have done every thing, or need do nothing, when they merely have had these good *thoughts*, which will save no one!

My object has been, as far as a few words can do it, to lead you to some true notion of the depths and deceitfulness of the heart, which we do not really know. It is easy to speak of human nature as corrupt in the general, to admit it in the general, and then get quit of the subject; as if the doctrine being once admitted, there was nothing more to be done with it. But in truth we can have no real apprehension of the doctrine of our corruption, till we view the structure of our minds, part by part; and dwell upon and draw out the signs of our weakness,

inconsistency, and ungodliness, which are such as can arise from nothing else than some strange original defect in our moral nature.

1. Now it will be well if such self-examination as I have suggested leads us to the habit of constant dependence upon the Unseen God, in whom "we live and move and have our being." We are in the dark about ourselves. When we act, we are groping in the dark, and may meet with a fall any moment. Here and there, perhaps, we see a little; or, in our attempts to influence and move our minds, we are making experiments (as it were) with some delicate and dangerous instrument, which works we do not know how, and may produce unexpected and disastrous effects. The management of our hearts is quite above us. Under these circumstances it becomes our comfort to look up to God. "Thou, God, seest me!" Such was the consolation of the forlorn Hagar in the wilderness. He knoweth whereof we are made, and He alone can uphold us. He sees with most appalling distinctness all our sins, all the windings and recesses of evil within us; yet it is our only comfort to know this, and to trust Him for help against ourselves. To those who have a right notion of their weakness, the thought of their Almighty Sanctifier and Guide is continually present. They believe in the necessity of a spiritual influence to change and strengthen them, not as a mere abstract doctrine, but as a practical and most consolatory truth, daily to be fulfilled in their warfare with sin and Satan.

2. And this conviction of our excessive weakness must further lead us to try ourselves continually in little things, in order to prove our own earnestness; ever to be suspicious of ourselves, and not only to refrain from promising much, but actually to put ourselves to the test in order to keep ourselves wakeful. A sober mind never enjoys God's blessings to the full; it draws back and refuses a portion to show its command over itself. It denies itself in trivial circumstances, even if nothing is gained by denying, but an evidence of its own sincerity. It makes trial of its own professions; and if it has been tempted to say anything noble and great, or to blame another for sloth or cowardice, it takes itself at its word, and resolves to make some sacrifice (if possible) in little things, as a price for the indulgence of fine speaking, or as a penalty on its censoriousness. Much would be gained if we adopted this rule even in our professions of friendship and service one towards another; and never said a thing which we were not willing to do.

There is only one place where the Christian allows himself to profess openly, and that is in Church. Here, under the guidance of Apostles and Prophets, he says many things boldly, as speaking after them, and as before Him who searcheth the reins. There can be no harm in professing much directly to God, because, *while* we speak, we know He sees through our professions, and takes them for what they really are, *prayers*. How much, for instance, do we profess when we say the Creed! and in the Collects we put on the full character of a Christian.

We desire and seek the best gifts, and declare our strong purpose to serve God with our whole hearts. By doing this, we remind ourselves of our duty; and withal, we humble ourselves by the taunt (so to call it) of putting upon our dwindled and unhealthy forms those ample and glorious garments which befit the upright and full-grown believer.

Lastly, we see from the parable, what is the course and character of human obedience on the whole. There are two sides of it. I have taken the darker side; the case of profession without practice, of saying "I go, Sir," and of not going. But what is the brighter side? Nothing better than to say, "I go not," and to repent and go. The more *common* condition of men is, not to know their inability to serve God, and readily to answer for themselves; and so they quietly pass through life, as if they had nothing to fear. Their best estate, what is it, but to rise more or less in rebellion against God, to resist His commandments and ordinances, and then poorly to make up for the mischief they have done, by repenting and obeying? Alas! to be alive as a Christian, is nothing better than to struggle against sin, to disobey and repent. There has been but One amongst the sons of men who has said and done *consistently*; who said, "I come to do Thy will, O God," and without delay or hindrance did it. He came to show us what human nature might become, if carried on to its perfection. Thus He teaches us to think highly of our nature as viewed in Him; not (as some do) to speak evil of our nature and exalt ourselves personally, but while we acknowledge *our own* distance from heaven, to view our *nature* as renewed in Him, as glorious and wonderful beyond our thoughts. Thus He teaches us to be hopeful; and encourages us while conscience abases us. Angels seem little in honour and dignity, compared with that nature which the Eternal Word has purified by His own union with it. Henceforth, we dare aspire to enter into the heaven of heavens, and to live forever in God's presence, because the first-fruits of our race is already there in the Person of His Only-begotten Son.

WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION

“Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead” (Acts 10:40–41).

IT MIGHT have been expected, that, on our Saviour’s rising again from the dead, He would have shown Himself to very great numbers of people, and especially to those who crucified Him; whereas we know from the history, that, far from this being the case, He showed Himself only to chosen witnesses, chiefly His immediate followers; and St. Peter avows this in the text. This seems at first sight strange. We are apt to fancy the resurrection of Christ as some striking visible display of His glory, such as God vouchsafed from time to time to the Israelites in Moses’ day; and considering it in the light of a public triumph, we are led to imagine the confusion and terror which would have overwhelmed His murderers, had He presented Himself alive before *them*. Now, thus to reason, is to conceive Christ’s kingdom of *this* world, which it is not; and to suppose that then Christ came to judge the world, whereas that judgment will not be till the last day, when in very deed those wicked men *shall* “look on Him whom they have pierced.”

But even without insisting upon the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, which seems to be the direct reason why Christ did not show Himself to all the Jews after His resurrection, other distinct reasons may be given, instructive too. And one of these I will now set before you.

This is the question, “Why did not our Saviour show Himself after His resurrection to all the people? why only to witnesses chosen before of God?” and this is my answer: “Because this was the most effectual means of propagating His religion through the world.”

After His resurrection, He said to His disciples, “Go convert all nations”: this was His especial charge. If, then, there are grounds for thinking that, by showing Himself to a few rather than to many, He was more surely advancing this great object, the propagation of the Gospel, this is a sufficient reason for our Lord’s having so ordained; and let us thankfully receive His dispensation, as He has given it.

1. Now consider what would have been the probable effect of a public exhibition of His resurrection. Let us suppose that our Saviour had shown Himself as openly as before He suffered; preaching in the Temple and in the streets of the city; traversing the land with His

Apostles, and with multitudes following to see the miracles which He did. What would have been the effect of this? Of course, what it had already been. His former miracles had not effectually moved the body of the people; and, doubtless, this miracle too would have left them as it found them, or worse than before. They might have been more startled at the time; but why should this amazement last? When the man taken with a palsy was suddenly restored at His word, the multitude were all amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today." What *could* they have said and felt more than this, when "one rose from the dead"? In truth, this is the way of the mass of mankind in all ages, to be influenced by sudden fears, sudden contrition, sudden earnestness, sudden resolves, which disappear as suddenly. Nothing is done effectually through untrained human nature; and such is ever the condition of the multitude. Unstable as water, it cannot excel. One day it cried Hosanna; the next, Crucify Him. And, had our Lord appeared to them *after* they had crucified Him, of course they would have shouted Hosanna once more; and when He had ascended out of sight, then again they would have persecuted His followers. Besides, the miracle of the Resurrection was much more exposed to the cavils of unbelief than others which our Lord had displayed; than that, for instance, of feeding the multitudes in the wilderness. Had our Lord appeared in public, yet few could have touched Him, and certified themselves it was He Himself. Few, comparatively, in a great multitude could so have seen Him both before and after His death, as to be adequate witnesses of the reality of the miracle. It would have been open to the greater number of them still to deny that He *was* risen. This is the very feeling St. Matthew records. When He appeared on a mountain in Galilee to His apostles and others, as it would seem (perhaps the five hundred brethren mentioned by St. Paul), "*some doubted*" whether it were He. How could it be otherwise? these had no means of ascertaining that they really saw *Him* who had been crucified, dead, and buried. Others, admitting it was Jesus, would have denied that He ever died. Not having seen Him dead on the cross, they might have pretended He was taken down thence before life was extinct, and so restored. This supposition would be a sufficient excuse to those who *wished* not to believe. And the more ignorant part would fancy they had seen a *spirit* without flesh and bones as man has. They would have resolved the miracle into a magical illusion, as the Pharisees had done before, when they ascribed His works to Beelzebub; and would have been rendered no better or more religious by the sight of Him, than the common people are nowadays by tales of apparitions and witches.

Surely so it would have been; the chief priests would not have been moved at all; and the populace, however they had been moved at the time, would not have been lastingly moved, not practically moved, not

so moved as to proclaim to the world what they had heard and seen, as to preach the Gospel. This is the point to be kept in view; and consider that the very reason *why* Christ showed Himself at all was in order to raise up *witnesses* to His resurrection, ministers of His word, founders of His Church; and how in the nature of things could a populace ever become such?

2. Now, on the other hand, let us contemplate the means which His Divine Wisdom actually adopted with a view of making His resurrection subservient to the propagation of His Gospel. — He showed Himself openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God. It is, indeed, a *general* characteristic of the course of His providence to make the few the channels of His blessings to the many; but in the instance we are contemplating, few were selected, because only a few *could* (humanly speaking) be made instruments. As I have already said, to be witnesses of His resurrection it was requisite to have known our Lord intimately before His death. This was the case with the Apostles; but this was not enough. It was necessary they should be certain it was He Himself, the very same whom they before knew. You recollect how He urged them to handle Him, and be sure that they could testify to His rising again. This is intimated in the text also; “witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.” Nor were they required merely to know Him, but the thought of Him was to be stamped upon their minds as the one master-spring of their whole course of life for the future. But men are not easily wrought upon to be faithful advocates of any cause. Not only is the multitude fickle: but the best men, unless urged, tutored, disciplined to their work, give way; untrained nature has no principles.

It would seem, then, that our Lord gave His attention to a few, because, if the few be gained, the many will follow. To these few He showed Himself again and again. These He restored, comforted, warned, inspired. He formed them unto Himself, that they might show forth His praise. This His gracious procedure is opened to us in the first words of the Book of the Acts. “To the Apostles whom He had chosen He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Consider, then, if we may state the alternative reverently, *which* of the two seems the more likely way, even according to a human wisdom, of forming preachers of the Gospel to all nations—the exhibition of the Resurrection to the Jewish people generally, or this intimate private certifying of it to a few? And remember that, as far as we can understand, the two procedures were inconsistent with each other; for that period of preparatory prayer, meditation, and instruction, which the Apostles passed under our Lord’s visible presence for forty days, was to them what it could not

have been, had they been following Him from place to place in public, supposing there had been an object in this, and mixing in the busy crowds of the world.

3. I have already suggested, what is too obvious almost to insist upon, that in making a select few the ministers of His mercy to mankind at large, our Lord was but acting according to the general course of His providence. It is plain every great change is effected by the few, not by the many; by the resolute, undaunted, zealous few. True it is that societies sometimes fall to pieces by their own corruption, which is in one sense a change without special instruments chosen or allowed by God; but this is a dissolution, not a work. Doubtless, much may be *undone* by the many, but nothing is *done* except by those who are specially trained for action. In the midst of the famine Jacob's sons stood looking one upon another, but did nothing. One or two men, of small outward pretensions, but with their hearts in their work, these do great things. These are prepared, not by sudden excitement, or by vague general belief in the truth of their cause, but by deeply impressed, often repeated instruction; and since it stands to reason that it is easier to teach a few than a great number, it is plain such men always will be few. Such as these spread the knowledge of Christ's resurrection over the idolatrous world. Well they answered the teaching of their Lord and Master. Their success sufficiently approves to us His wisdom in showing Himself to them, not to all the people.

4. Remember, too, this further reason why the witnesses of the Resurrection were few in number; viz. because they were on the side of *Truth*. If the witnesses were to be such as really loved and obeyed the Truth, there *could not* be many chosen. Christ's cause was the cause of light and religion, therefore His advocates and ministers were necessarily few. It is an old proverb (which even the heathen admitted), that "the many are bad." Christ did not confide His Gospel to the many; had He done so, we may even say, that it would have been at first sight a presumption against its coming from God. What was the chief work of His whole ministry, but that of choosing and separating *from* the multitude those who should be fit recipients of His Truth? As He went the round of the country again and again, through Galilee and Judea, He tried the spirits of men the while; and rejecting the baser sort who "honoured Him with their lips while their hearts were far from Him," He specially chose twelve. The many He put aside for a while as an adulterous and sinful generation, intending to make one last experiment on the mass when the Spirit should come. But His twelve He brought near to Himself at once, and taught them. Then He sifted them, and one fell away; the eleven escaped as though by fire. *For* these eleven especially He rose again; He visited *them* and taught *them* for forty days; for in *them* He saw the fruit of the "travail of His soul and was satisfied"; in them "He saw His seed, He prolonged His days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in His hand." These were

His witnesses, for they had the love of the Truth in their hearts. "I have chosen you," He says to them, "and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

So much then in answer to the question, Why did not Christ show Himself to the whole Jewish people after His resurrection. I ask in reply, what would have been the use of it? a mere passing triumph over sinners whose judgment is reserved for the next world. On the other hand, such a procedure would have interfered with, nay, defeated, the real object of His rising again, the propagation of His Gospel through the world by *means of His own intimate friends* and followers. And further, this preference of the few to the many seems to have been necessary from the nature of man, since all great works are effected, not by a multitude, but by the deep-seated resolution of a few;—nay, necessary too from man's depravity, for, alas! popular favour is hardly to be expected for the cause of Truth. And our Lord's instruments were few, if for no other reason, yet at least for this, because more were not to be found, because there were but few faithful Israelites without guile in Israel according to the flesh.

Now, let us observe how much matter, both for warning and comfort, is supplied by this view. We learn from the picture of the *infant Church* what that Church has been ever since, that is, as far as man can understand it. Many are called, few are chosen. We learn to reflect on the great danger there is, lest we be not in the *number* of the chosen, and are warned to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation," to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," to seek God's mercy in His Holy Church, and to pray to Him ever that He would "fulfill in us the good pleasure of His will," and complete what He once began.

But, besides this, we are comforted too; we are comforted, as many of us as are living humbly in the fear of God. Who those secret ones are, who in the bosom of the visible Church live as saints fulfilling their calling, God only knows. We are in the dark about it. We may indeed know much about ourselves, and we may form somewhat of a judgment about those with whom we are well acquainted. But of the general body of Christians we know little or nothing. It is our duty to consider them as Christians, to take them as we find them, and to love them; and it is no concern of ours to debate about their state in God's sight. Without, however, entering into this question concerning God's secret counsels, let us receive this truth before us for a practical purpose; that is, I speak to *all who* are conscious to themselves that they wish and try to serve God, whatever their progress in religion be, and whether or not they dare apply to themselves, or in whatever degree, the title of Christian in its most sacred sense. All who obey the Truth are on the side of the Truth, and the Truth will prevail. Few in number but strong in the Spirit, despised by the world, yet making way while they suffered, the twelve Apostles overturned the power of darkness,

and established the Christian Church. And let all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" be quite sure, that weak though they seem, and solitary, yet the "foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The many are "deceitful," and the worldly-wise are "vain"; but he "that feareth the Lord, the same shall be praised." The most excellent gifts of the intellect last but for a season. Eloquence and wit, shrewdness and dexterity, these plead a cause well and propagate it quickly, but it dies with them. It has no root in the hearts of men, and lives not out a generation. It is the consolation of the despised Truth, that its works endure. Its words are few, but they live. Abel's faith to this day, "yet speaketh." The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church. "Fret not thyself" then "because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good . . . delight thyself also in Him, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart; commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. . . . He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day. . . . A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of *many* wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. . . . I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, yet he passed away, and, lo! he was not; yea, I sought him, and he could not be found." The heathen world made much ado when the Apostles preached the Resurrection. They and their associates were sent out as lambs among wolves; but they prevailed.

We, too, though we are not witnesses of Christ's actual resurrection, are so spiritually. By a heart awake from the dead, and by affections set on heaven, we can as truly and without figure witness that Christ liveth, as they did. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. Truth bears witness by itself to its Divine Author. He who obeys God conscientiously, and lives holily, forces all about him to believe and tremble before the unseen power of Christ. To the world indeed at large he witnesses not; for few can see him near enough to be moved by his manner of living. But to his neighbours he manifests the Truth in proportion to their knowledge of him; and some of them, through God's blessing, catch the holy flame, cherish it, and in their turn transmit it. And thus in a dark world Truth still makes way in spite of the darkness, passing from hand to hand. And thus it keeps its station in high places, acknowledged as the creed of nations, the multitude of which are ignorant, the while, on what it rests, how it came there, how it keeps its ground; and despising it, think it easy to dislodge it. But "the Lord reigneth." He is risen from the dead, "His throne is established of old; He is from everlasting. The floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves

of the sea. His testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh His house for ever."

Let these be our thoughts whenever the prevalence of error leads us to despond. When St. Peter's disciple, Ignatius, was brought before the Roman emperor, he called himself Theophorus; and when the emperor asked the feeble old man why he so called himself, Ignatius said it was because he carried Christ in his breast. He witnessed there was but One God, who made heaven, earth, and sea, and all that is in them, and One Lord Jesus Christ, His Only-begotten Son, "whose kingdom (he added) be my portion!" The emperor asked, "His kingdom, say you, who was crucified under Pilate?" "His (answered the Saint) who crucified my sin in me, and who has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under the feet of those who carry Him in their hearts: as it is written, 'I dwell in them and walk in them.'"

Ignatius was one against many, as St. Peter had been before him; and was put to death as the Apostle had been; but he handed on the Truth, in his day. At length we have received it. Weak though we be, and solitary, God forbid we should not in our turn hand it on; glorifying Him by our lives, and in all our words and works witnessing Christ's passion, death, and resurrection!

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:11).

IN TAKING THESE WORDS as a text, I do not profess to give you any sufficient explanation of them. Doubtless in their full meaning they are too deep for mortal man; yet they are written for our reverent contemplation at least, and perchance may yield something, under God's blessing, even though the true and entire sense of them was lost to

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the Church with him who wrote them. He was admitted into the heaven of heavens, while yet in the flesh, as St. Paul before him. He saw the throne and Him who sat on it; and his words, as those of the prophets under the Law, are rather spontaneous accompaniments on what he saw, than definite and complete descriptions addressed to us. They were provided, indeed, and directed according to our need, by an overruling inspiration; but the same sacred influence also limited their range, and determined under what aspect and circumstances they should delineate the awful realities of heaven. Thus they are but shadows cast, or at best, lines or portions caught from what is unseen, and they attend upon it after the manner of the Seraphim, with wings covering their face, and wings covering their feet, in adoration and in mystery.

Now as to the text itself, it speaks of the Martyrs in their disembodied state, between death and judgment; according to the foregoing verse, "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." It describes them in a state of rest; still they cry out for some relief, for vengeance upon their persecutors. They are told to wait awhile, "to rest yet for a little season," till the circle of Martyrs is completed. Meantime they receive some present earnest of the promise, by way of alleviation; "white robes were given unto every one of them."

Some men will say that this is all figurative, and means merely that the blood of the Martyrs, crying now for vengeance, will be requited on their murderers at the last day. I cannot persuade myself thus to dismiss so solemn a passage. It seems a presumption to say of dim notices about the unseen world, "they only mean this or that," as if one had ascended into the third heaven, or had stood before the throne of God. No; I see herein a deep mystery, a hidden truth, which I cannot handle or define, shining "as jewels at the bottom of the great deep," darkly and tremulously, yet really there. And for this very reason, while it is neither pious nor thankful to explain away the words which convey it, while it is a duty to use them, not less a duty is it to use them humbly, diffidently, and teachably, with the thought of God before us, and of our own nothingness.

Under these feelings I shall now attempt to comment upon the text, and with reference to the Intermediate State, of which it seems plainly to speak. But it will be best rather to use it as sanctioning and connecting our anticipations of that State, as drawn from more obvious passages of Scripture, than to venture to infer anything from it in the first instance. Also, though it directly speaks of the Martyrs, it may be profitably applied to the case of all Saints whatever; for, the Martyrs being types and first fruits of all, what is true of them, is perchance in some sense true also of their brethren; and if it be true of any, at least all antecedent objections vanish, against its being true of all, which

are the chief arguments we shall have to contend with. Now let us proceed to the consideration proposed.

St. John says: "I saw under the Altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

1. Now first in this passage we are told that the Saints are *at rest*. "White robes were given unto every one of them." "It was said unto them that they should *rest* yet for a little season." This is expressed still more strongly in a later passage of the same book: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they *may rest from their labours*." Again, St. Paul had a desire "to depart and *to be with Christ*, which (he adds) is far better." And our Lord told the penitent robber, "Today shalt thou be with Me in *paradise*." And in the parable He represents Lazarus as being "*in Abraham's bosom*"; a place of rest surely, if words can describe one.

If we had no other notice of the dead than the foregoing, it would appear quite sufficient for our need. The great and anxious question that meets us is, what is to become of us after this life? We fear for ourselves, we are solicitous about our friends, just on this point. They have vanished from us with all their amiable and endearing qualities, all their virtues, all their active powers. Where is that spirit gone, over the wide universe, up or down, which once thought, felt, loved, hoped, planned, acted in our sight, and which, wherever it goes, must carry with it the same affections and principles, desires and aims? We know how it thought, felt, and behaved itself on earth; we know that beloved mind, and it knows us, with a mutual consciousness; and now it is taken from us, what are its fortunes?—This is the question which perplexed the heathen of old time. It is fearful to be exposed in this world to ills we know of—to the fury of the elements and the darkness of night, should we be left houseless and shelterless. But when we think how utterly ignorant we are both of the soul's nature and of the invisible world, the idea of losing friends, or departing ourselves into such gloom, is, to those who get themselves to think about it, very overpowering. Now, here Scripture meets our need, in the texts already cited. It is enough, surely, to be in Abraham's bosom, in our Saviour's presence; it is enough, after the pain and turmoil of this world, to be at rest.

Moreover, texts such as these do more than satisfy the doubts which beset the heathen; they are useful to us at the present day, in a perplexity which may easily befall us. A great part of the Christian world,

as is well known, believes that after this life the souls of Christians ordinarily go into a prison called Purgatory, where they are kept in fire or other torment, till, their sins being burned away, they are at length fitted for that glorious kingdom into which nothing defiled can enter. Now, if there were any good reason for this belief, we should certainly have a very sad and depressing prospect before us: watch and pray and struggle as we might, yet after all to have to pass from the sorrows of this life, from its weariness and its pains, into a second and a worse trial! Not that we should have any reason to complain: for our sins deserve an eternal punishment, were God severe. Still it would be a very afflicting thought, especially as regarded our deceased friends, who (if the doctrine were true) would now at this very moment, be in a state of suffering. I do not say that to many a sinner, it would not be an infinitely less evil to suffer for a time in Purgatory, than to be cast into hell for ever; but those whom we have loved best, and revered most, are not of this number; and before going on to examine the grounds of it, everyone must admit it to be a very frightful notion at least, that *they* should be kept from their rest, and confined in a prison beneath the earth. Nay, though the Bible did not positively affirm it, yet it did not contradict it, and if the opinion itself was very general in the Church (as it is), and primitive too (as it is not), there would be enough in it reasonably to alarm us; for who could tell in such a case, but probably it might be true? This is what might have been; but, in fact, Christ has mercifully interfered, expressly to assure us that our friends are better provided for than this doctrine would make it appear. He assures us that they "*rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*"; and we gather from the text, that even that loneliness and gloom which, left to themselves, they would necessarily feel, though ever so secured from actual punishment, may, in truth, be mercifully compensated. The sorrowful state is there described, in which they would find themselves when severed from the body, and waiting for the promised glory at Christ's coming, and they are represented as sustained under it, soothed, quieted, consoled. As a parent would hush a child's restlessness, cherishing it in her arms, and lulling it to sleep, or diverting it from the pain or the fright which agitates it, so the season of delay, before Christ comes in judgment, tedious in itself, and solitary, is compensated to the spirits of the just by a present gift in earnest of the future joy. "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" Such is their complaint. "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season," till the end.

2. Next, in this description is implied, what I have in fact already deduced from it, that departed Saints, though at rest, have not yet received their actual reward. "Their works do follow with them," not yet given in to their Saviour and Judge. They are in an incomplete

state in every way, and will be so till the Day of Judgment, which will introduce them to the joy of their Lord.

They are incomplete, inasmuch as their bodies are in the dust of the earth, and they wait for the Resurrection.

They are incomplete, as being neither awake nor asleep; I mean, they are in a state of rest, not in the full employment of their powers. The Angels are serving God actively; they are ministers between heaven and earth. And the Saints, too, one day shall judge the world — they shall judge the fallen Angels; but at present, till the end comes, they are at rest only, which is enough for their peace, enough for our comfort on thinking of them, still incomplete, compared with what one day shall be.

Further, there is an incompleteness also as regards their place of rest. They are “under the Altar.” Not in the full presence of God, seeing His face, and rejoicing in His works, but in a safe and holy treasure-house close by, — like Moses, “in a cleft of the rock,” — covered by the hand of God, and beholding the skirts of His glory. So again, when Lazarus died, he was carried to Abraham’s bosom; which, however honoured and peaceful an abode, was a place short of heaven. This is elsewhere expressed by the use of the word “paradise,” or the garden of Eden; which, again, though pure and peaceful, visited by Angels and by God Himself, was not heaven. No emblem could express more vividly the refreshment and sweetness of that blessed rest, than to call it the garden in which the first man was placed — to which must be added St. Paul’s account of it, that he heard in it (when he was caught up thither) “unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Doubtless, it is full of excellent visions and wonderful revelations. God there manifests Himself, not as on earth dimly, and by material instruments, but by those more intimate approaches which spirit admits of, and our present faculties cannot comprehend. And in some unknown way, that place of rest has a communication with this world, so that disembodied souls know what is going on below. The Martyrs, in the passage before us, cry out, “How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” They saw what was going on in the Church, and needed comfort from the sight of the triumph of evil. And they obtained white robes and a message of peace. Still, whatever be their knowledge, whatever their happiness, they have but lost their tabernacle of corruption, and are “unclothed,” and wait to be “clothed upon,” having put off “mortality,” but not yet being absorbed in “life.”

There is another word used in Scripture to express the abode of just men made perfect, which gives us the same meaning. Our Lord is said in the Creed to have “descended into *hell*,” which word has a very different sense there from that which it commonly bears. Our Saviour, as we suppose, did not go to the abyss assigned to the fallen Angels,

but to those mysterious mansions where the souls of all men await the judgment. That He went to the abode of blessed spirits is evident, from His words addressed to the robber on the cross, when He also called it paradise; that he went to some other place besides paradise, may be conjectured from St. Peter's saying, He "went and preached to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient." The circumstance then that these two abodes of disembodied good and bad, are called by one name, Hades, or (as we happen to express it) hell, seems clearly to show that paradise is not the same as Heaven, but a resting-place at the foot of it. Let it be further remarked, that Samuel, when brought from the dead, in the witch's cavern, said, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" words which would seem quite inconsistent with his being then already in Heaven.

Once more, the Intermediate State is incomplete as regards the happiness of the Saints. Before our Lord came, it may be supposed even to have admitted at times of a measure of disquiet, and that in the case of the greatest Saints themselves, though most surely still they were altogether "in God's hand"; for Samuel says, "Why hast thou *disquieted* me, to bring me up?" Perchance our Lord reversed this imperfection at His coming, and took with Him, even in their bodies, to heaven itself, some principal Saints of the old Covenant; according to St. Matthew's intimation. But even now, as it would appear from the text, the Blessed, in their disembodied state, admit of an increase of happiness, and receive it. "They cried out" in complaint, and "white robes were given them"; they were soothed and bid wait awhile.

Nor would it be surprising if, in God's gracious providence, the very purpose of their remaining thus for a season at a distance from heaven, were, that they may have time for growing in all holy things, and perfecting the inward development of the good seed sown in their hearts. The Psalmist speaks of the righteous as "trees planted by the rivers of water, that bring forth their fruit in due season"; and when might this silent growth of holiness more suitably and happily take place, than when they are waiting for the Day of the Lord, removed from those trials and temptations which were necessary for its early beginnings? Consider how many men are very dark and feeble in their religious state, when they depart hence, though true servants of God as far as they go. Alas! I know that the multitude of men do not think of religion at all; — they are thoughtless in their youth, and secular as life goes on; — they find their interest lie in adopting a decent profession; they deceive themselves, and think themselves religious, and (to all appearance) die with no deeper religion than such a profession implies. Alas! there are many also, who, after careless lives, amend, yet not truly; — think they repent, but do not in a Christian way. There are a number, too, who leave repentance for their death-bed, and die with no fruits of religion at all, except with so much of subdued and serious feeling as pain forces upon them. All these, as

far as we are told, die without hope. But, after all these melancholy cases are allowed for, many there are still, who, beginning well, and persevering for years, yet are even to the end but beginners after all, when death comes upon them—many who have been in circumstances of especial difficulty, who have had fiercer temptations, more perplexing trials than the rest, and in consequence have been impeded in their course. Nay, in one sense, all Christians die with their work unfinished. Let them have chastened themselves all their lives long, and lived in faith and obedience, yet still there is much in them unsubdued,—much pride, much ignorance, much unrepented, unknown sin, much inconsistency, much irregularity in prayer, much lightness and frivolity of thought. Who can tell, then, but, in God's mercy, the time of waiting between death and Christ's coming, may be profitable to those who have been His true servants here, as a time of maturing that fruit of grace, but partly formed in them in this life—a school-time of contemplation, as this world is a discipline of active service? Such, surely, is the force of the Apostle's words, that "He that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it *until* the day of Jesus Christ," *until*, not *at*, not stopping it with death, but carrying it on to the Resurrection. And this, which will be accorded to all Saints, will be profitable to each in proportion to the degree of holiness in which he dies; for, as we are expressly told that in one sense the spirits of the just are *perfected* on their death, it follows that the greater advance each has made here, the higher will be the line of his subsequent growth between death and the Resurrection.

And all this accounts for what else may surprise us—the especial stress the Apostles lay on the coming of Christ, as the object to which our hope must be directed. We are used in this day to look upon death as the point of victory and triumph for the Saints; we leave the thought of them when life is over, as if then there was nothing more to be anxious about; nor in one sense is there. Then they are secure from trial, from falling; as they die, so they remain. Still, it will be found, on the whole, that death is not *the* object put forward in Scripture for hope to rest upon, but the *coming of Christ*, as if the interval between death and His coming was by no means to be omitted in the process of our preparation for heaven. Now, if the sacred writers uniformly hold out Christ's coming, but we consider death, as the close of all things, is it not plain that, in spite of our apparent agreement with them in formal statements of doctrine, there must be some hidden and undetected difference between them and ourselves, some unfounded notion on our part which we have inherited, some assumed premiss, some lurking prejudice, some earthly temper, or some mere human principle? For instance, St. Paul speaks of the Corinthians as "*waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" To the Philippians he says, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we *look out for the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile

body." In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, he seems to make this waiting for the Last Day almost part of his definition of a true Christian; "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." In his Epistle to Titus, "*Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" To the Hebrews, "Unto them that look for Him, shall Christ appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Again, "*Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.*" And to the Romans, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," i.e. at the Resurrection; for *the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*"; and presently he adds, evidently speaking of things belonging to the unseen world, and (as we may suppose) the Intermediate State inclusively, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor *things to come*, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Again, "He that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; . . . for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Now, how parallel is this waiting for Christ's coming, as inculcated in the foregoing passages, to the actual conduct of the Saints as recorded in the passage of which the text forms part! "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? . . . And white robes were given unto every one of them, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled*"—and with our Saviour's words in the Gospel, "Shall not God *avenge* His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, *when the Son of man cometh*" (Christ's coming then is the "avenging" for which they cry), "when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth."

This, indeed, is our Saviour's usual doctrine as well as that of His Apostles. I mean, it is his custom to insist on two events chiefly, His first coming and His second—our regeneration and our resurrection—throwing into the background the prospect of our death, as if it were but a line of distinction (however momentous a one), not of division, in the extended course of our purification. For example: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of

God, and they that hear shall live"; — the dead in sin; here, then, our regeneration is set forth. Then He proceeds: "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Here is mentioned His second coming with its attendant events. Again: "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I *will come again* and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And in the parable of the talents: "A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return; and he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." Here is mention of Christ's first and His second coming. It is not uncommon, indeed, to say, that "till I come," means "till every man's death," when in a certain sense Christ comes to him: but surely this is a mere human assumption; the time of judgment, and not till then, is the time when Christ calls His servants and takes account.

Lastly, it is the manner of Scripture to imply that all Saints make up but one body, Christ being the Head, and no real distinction existing between dead and living; as if the Church's territory were a vast field, only with a veil stretched across it, hiding part from us. This at least, I think, will be the impression left on the mind after a careful study of the inspired writers. St. Paul says, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the *whole* family in heaven and earth is named," where "heaven" would seem to include paradise. Presently he declares that there is but "one body," not two, as there is but one Spirit. In another epistle he speaks of Christians in the flesh being "come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and the spirits of just men made perfect." Agreeably to this doctrine, the collect for All Saints' Day teaches us, that "Almighty God has knit together His elect" (that is, both living and dead), "in *one* communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son."

This, then, on the whole, we may humbly believe to be the condition of the Saints before the Resurrection, a state of repose, rest, security; but again a state more like paradise than heaven — that is, a state which comes short of the glory which shall be revealed in us after the resurrection, a state of waiting, meditation, hope, in which what has been sown on earth may be matured and completed.

I will make one remark before concluding, by way of applying what has been said to ourselves. There have been times, we know, when men thought too much of the dead. That is not the fault of this age. We now go into the opposite extreme. Our fault surely is, to think of them too little. It is a miserable thing to confess, yet surely so it is, that when a friend or relative is dead, he is commonly dismissed from the mind very shortly, as though he was not; there is no more talk of

him, or reference to him, and the world goes on without him as if he had never been. Now, of course the deepest feelings are those which are silent; so I do not mean to say that friends are not thought of, because they are not talked of. How could it be? Can any form of society or any human doctrine fetter down our hearts, and make us think and remember as it will? Can the tyranny of earth hinder our holding a blessed and ever-enduring fellowship with those who are dead, by consulting their wishes, and dwelling upon their image, and trying to imitate them, and imagining their peaceful state, and sympathizing in their "loud cry," and hoping to meet them hereafter? No, truly! we have a more glorious liberty than man can take from us, with all the sophistries of selfishness, and subtleties of the schools! I do not speak of the tender-hearted, affectionate, and thoughtful. They cannot forget the departed, whose presence they once enjoyed, and who (in Scripture language), though "absent in the body, are present with them in spirit," "joying and beholding their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ." But I speak of the many, the rude, cold, and scornful, the worldly-minded, the gay, and the careless; whose ordinary way it is, when a friend is removed, to put aside the thought of him, and blot it out from their memories.

Let me explain what I mean by taking an instance which is not uncommon. We will say, a parent or relative dies and leaves a man a property: he comes into it gladly; buries the dead splendidly; and then thinking he has done all, he wipes out what is past, and enters upon the enjoyment of his benefaction. He is not profuse or profligate, proud or penurious, but he thinks and acts in all respects as if he, to whom he is indebted, were annihilated from God's creation. He has no obligations. He was dependent before, but now he is independent; he is his own master; he ceases to be in the number of "little children." Like the Corinthians, "now he is full, now he is rich, he reigns as a king without" those to whom he once was forced to submit. He is the head of (what is called) an establishment. If he ever speaks of the dead, it is in a way half kind, half contemptuous, as of those who are helpless and useless, as he would speak of men still living who were in dotage or in mental incapacity. You hear even the most good-hearted and kindly (such is the force of bad example) speak in this disrespectful way of old people they knew in their youth, not meaning anything unkind by it, but still, doubtless, cherishing in themselves thereby a very subtle kind of hardness, selfishness, superciliousness, self-gratulation. Men little think what an effect all this has on their general character. It teaches them to limit their belief to what they see. They give up a most gracious means divinely provided for their entering into "that which is within the veil," and seeing beyond the grave; and they learn to be contented in uniting themselves with things visible, in connections and alliances which come to nought. Moreover, this same error casts them upon the present instead of the past. They lose

their reverence for antiquity; they change the plans and works of their predecessors without scruple; they enjoy the benefactions of past ages without thankfulness, as if by a sort of right; they worship in churches for which "other men laboured," without thinking of them; they forget they have but a life-interest in what they possess, that they have received it in trust, and must transmit as they have received.

On the other hand, while the thought of the dead is thus a restraint upon us, it is also a great consolation, especially in this age of the world, when the Universal Church has fallen into errors and is divided branch against branch. What shall sustain our faith (under God's grace) when we try to adhere to the Ancient Truth, and seem solitary? What shall nerve the "watchman on the walls of Jerusalem," against the scorn and jealousy of the world, the charge of singularity, of fancifulness, or extravagance, of rashness? What shall keep us calm and peaceful within, when accused of "troubling Israel," and "propheying evil"? What but the vision of all Saints of all ages, whose steps we follow? What but the image of Christ mystical stamped upon our hearts and memories? The early times of purity and truth have not passed away! They are present still! We are not solitary, though we seem so. Few now alive may understand or sanction us; but those multitudes in the primitive time, who believed, and taught, and worshipped, as we do, still live unto God, and, in their past deeds and their present voices, cry from the Altar. They animate us by their example; they cheer us by their company; they are on our right hand and our left, Martyrs, Confessors, and the like, high and low, who used the same Creeds, and celebrated the same Mysteries, and preached the same Gospel as we do. And to them were joined, as ages went on, even in fallen times, nay, even now in times of division, fresh and fresh witnesses from the Church below. In the world of spirits there is no difference of parties. It is our plain duty indeed here, to contend even for the details of the Truth according to our light; and surely there is a Truth in spite of the discordance of opinions. But that Truth is at length simply discerned by the spirits of the just; human additions, human institutions, human enactments, enter not with them into the unseen state. They are put off with the flesh. Greece and Rome, England and France, give no colour to those souls which have been cleansed in the One Baptism, nourished by the One Body, and moulded upon the One Faith. Adversaries agree together directly they are dead, if they have lived and walked in the Holy Ghost. The harmonies combine and fill the temple, while discords and imperfections die away. Therefore is it good to throw ourselves into the unseen world, it is "good to be there," and to build tabernacles for those who speak "a pure language" and "serve the Lord with one consent"; not indeed to draw them forth from their secure dwelling-places, not superstitiously to honour them, or wilfully to rely on them, lest they be a snare to us, but silently to contemplate them for our edification; thereby encourag-

ing our faith, enlivening our patience, sheltering us from thoughts about ourselves, keeping us from resting on ourselves, and making us seem to ourselves (what really we ought ever to be) only followers of the doctrine of those who have gone before us, not teachers of novelities, not founders of schools.

God grant to us all, out of the superabundant treasures of His grace, such a spirit, the spirit of mingled teachableness and zeal, of calmness in inquiry and vigour in resolve, of power, and of love, and of a sound mind!

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN:

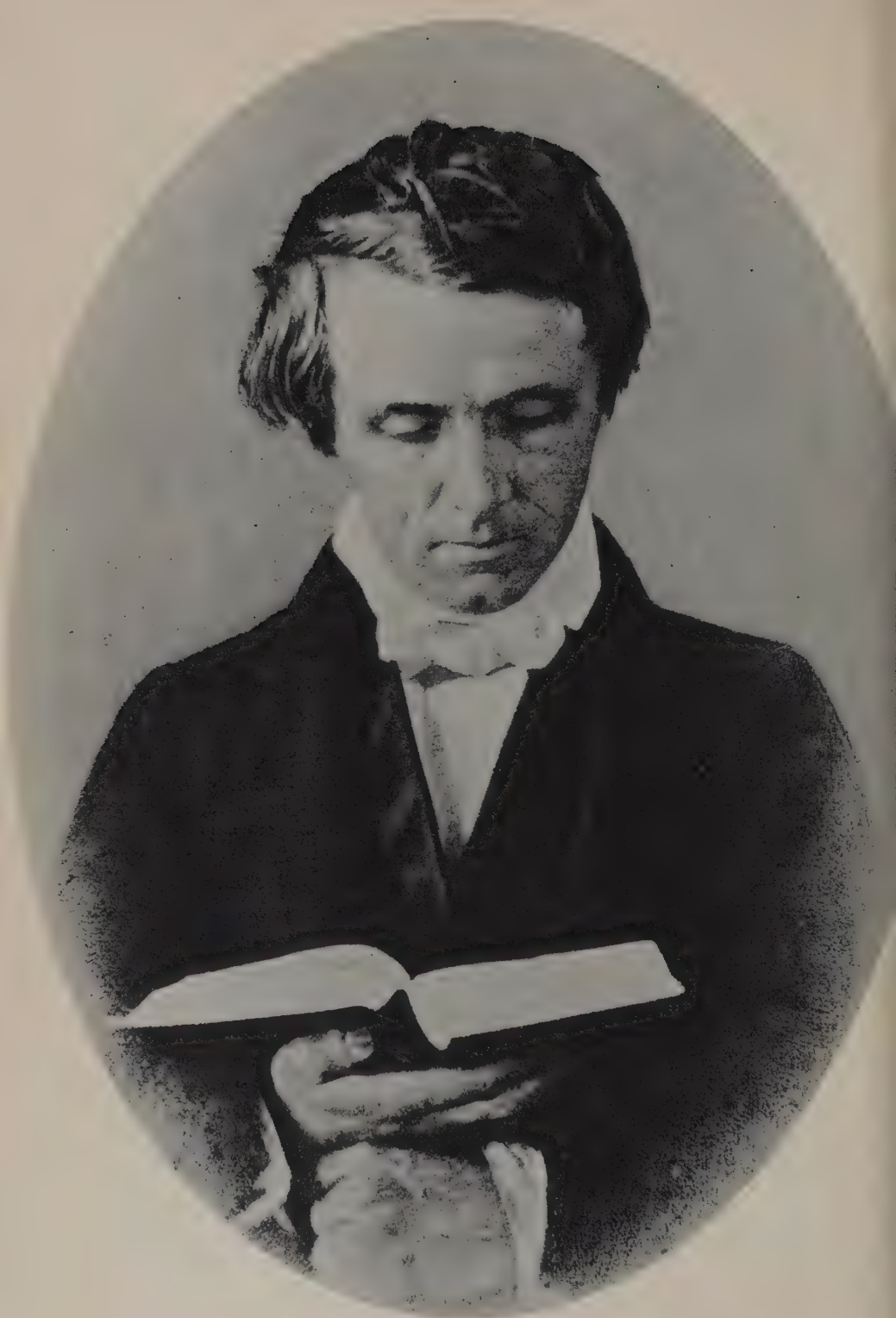
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HORACE BUSHNELL

1802-1876



HORACE BUSHNELL, from a daguerreotype made about 1847, from *Horace Bushnell: Preacher and Theologian* by Theodore T. Munger (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1899), frontispiece.

HORACE BUSHNELL

- 1802 *Born on April 14 near Litchfield, Connecticut*
1821 *United with the church*
1823 *Entered Yale*
1827 *Received B.A. from Yale, began to teach school, took position on editorial staff of the Journal of Commerce in New York, entered law school in New Haven*
1829 *Became tutor at Yale, continued study of law*
1831 *Entered Yale Divinity School following his conversion*
1833 *Became pastor of the North Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut, and married Mary Apthorp*
1845 *Suffered a complete breakdown of health and spent a year in Europe*
1857 *Participated in the great revival in New England of 1857-58*
1859 *Resigned church because of ill health*
1876 *Died February 17 in Hartford, Connecticut*

THE MOTHER OF PHILLIPS BROOKS warned him in a letter against reading certain sermons of Horace Bushnell. She felt that Bushnell's theology would corrupt her son. Evidently Phillips Brooks did not heed his mother's advice; Bushnell's *Sermons for the New Life* showed signs of being one of the most used books in Brooks' library.

Phillips Brooks was not the only man to come under the influence of Horace Bushnell. Many preachers and laymen have been deeply affected by Bushnell's sermons and writings. Some of his sermons are among the most famous by American preachers. His book *Christian Nurture* has stirred as much controversy and wielded as much influence as any other writing by an American preacher.

LIFE AND TIMES

Horace Bushnell, born near Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1802, lived during one of the most tumultuous and rapidly changing periods in American history. In his lifetime America grew from a cluster of states on the eastern seaboard to a nation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Bushnell lived during the national upheavals created by war with England (1812) and Mexico (1845) and by the War Between the States (1861-65). He witnessed the impact upon the intellectual life of New England from the backwash of the French Revolution. He was in the midst of one of the most serious theological squabbles to erupt in American church life, that between old conservative New England theology and the new emerging liberalism.

Bushnell's parents prepared him well for the life he was to live. His mother had been a devout Episcopalian and his father a Methodist. When the family moved from the place of his birth to New Preston, Connecticut, they became members of the Congregational church. His mother continued her devotional emphasis. The nature of her Christian character is indicated by the fact that she dedicated Bushnell to the Christian ministry before he was born.

Horace Bushnell's father was a farmer and an operator of a small manufacturing business. The son worked with the father in the hard labor of both these sources of income. Neither produced much income, however, and the family was poor. As a result, Bushnell delayed his college education until he was able to help assume the costs.

At Yale Bushnell was a mediocre student. After graduation he took a teaching position. But when he received an offer from the *Journal of Commerce* in New York to take a position on its editorial staff, he accepted. He found journalism distasteful, however, and returned to New Haven to enter law school. Bushnell experienced a severe inner struggle over what direction his life should take. He knew that his mother wanted him to become a minister, but he had no interest in the task. Furthermore, he had serious doubts as to whether or not he was even a Christian. Finally he decided to be a lawyer. He was on his way to a city in the West to begin law practice when he received a note from the president of Yale asking him to return to Yale as a tutor. With his mother's encouragement, he accepted the offer.

In the fall of 1829 he assumed his position at Yale as a tutor; he also continued to study law. During that time a religious revival swept the campus that affected almost all of the students and many of the faculty. One by one the tutors gave in to the spirit of religious revivals, but Bushnell held out. He was still struggling with religious doubt. Bushnell testified that he was greatly aided in this religious struggle by Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*.¹ Finally, after great deliberation, he committed himself to a sincere effort to follow the Christian faith. This seems to have been a significant religious experience for him. Though he continued all of his life to be something of a searcher and challenger of orthodox concepts, after this experience he never wavered in his commitment to the Christian faith.

After his deep religious experience, Bushnell decided to enter the ministry. He enrolled in the Yale Divinity School where he soon found himself embroiled in conflict with the professors. Because they were highly Calvinistic and defenders of slavery, these men had little appeal for Bushnell. During these arguments Bushnell began to display some of the bent for theological conflict which characterized much of his later life.

Upon completion of his work in the Yale Divinity School, he became pastor of the North Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut. During the same year, 1833, he married Mary Apthorp. He immensely enjoyed preaching but found some of the duties of the pastorate tedious. The many interruptions of his study and of his efforts to prepare sermons particularly frustrated him.

Plagued by ill health, he was never able to function physically with the same capacity as he was able to function mentally. In 1845 he suffered a complete breakdown of health and spent a year in Europe recovering. After his return he again assumed an active role in the church at Hartford. During this time he wrote his famous work, *Christian Nurture*. The book set forth Bushnell's concept that it is possible to educate a person into the Christian life without the necessity of a sudden conversion experience.

This writing, and others, brought him into severe conflict with a number of other ministers. Several abortive efforts were

1. Theodore T. Munger, *Horace Bushnell: Preacher and Theologian* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1899), p. 46.

made to bring him to trial for heresy. On one occasion, when charges were formally made, the committee decided in his favor. Finally his church withdrew from the Congregational fellowship of the area; this made it more difficult for formal heresy trials to be held. Bushnell was caught between the old conservative theology of New England and the new liberal theology which was breaking out all over that part of the United States. He sided with neither group and tried to walk a middle course; nevertheless, many of his statements antagonized the conservatives. He himself seems to have felt that he was returning to orthodoxy rather than moving toward heresy.

Many of his later writings do display a return to a more commonly accepted orthodox position. Early in his life he had rejected the sacrificial concept of the atonement, but in later writings he embraced it experientially, if not rationally. Much of the conflict which raged over Bushnell's theology probably resulted from his choice of words. He avoided technical theological language and tried to put religious concepts into the language of the people. Certainly his interest in Christian nurture did not kill his concern for evangelism; he threw himself wholeheartedly into the activities of the great revival in New England of 1857-58.

The strain of the pastorate—frequent preaching, voluminous writing, theological wars, and the extra efforts called for by the revival of 1857-58—finally crushed his health. In 1859 he resigned the only church he had ever pastored. The church generously gave him \$10,000; he set out in search of health, but never found it.

For the rest of his life he wrote, traveled, and occasionally preached, in spite of ill health. Finally, on February 17, 1876, in the town where he had pastored for so long, Bushnell died. Hartford deeply mourned him because he was not only pastor of a church but also a deeply influential and compassionate citizen of the community. As an expression of the town's appreciation, a large park was named for him.

Bushnell had a significant influence through his ministry because he dealt in a clear way with the vital issues of his day. He refused to sidestep controversy even when it cost him his health. He was determined to set forth his views and to help others understand how theology can be related to life. Many young ministers in New England testified that they

remained in their pulpits only because Bushnell showed them that the Christian faith could be related to daily life.

He dealt with the issues of slavery, education, citizenship, and, of course, theological controversy. There is good evidence that at times he was more hard-headed than open-minded, but no one ever charged him with being dishonest. He was deeply committed to his views and zealous for the truth as he saw it.

Bushnell had little sympathy for the finer points of theology. He was also little impressed by denominational systems or narrow, rigid church structures. In some of these views he was at least a century ahead of his own time.

Above all he was a preacher, and it was as a preacher that he made his greatest contributions. Two of his sermons, "Unconscious Influence" and "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," are rated as two of the finest in the English language. Three volumes of his sermons are the very finest expressions of pulpit style: *Sermons for the New Life, Christ and His Salvation*, and *Sermons on Living Subjects*. The preaching of most men is fashioned by the theology of the day; Bushnell's preaching helped fashion the theology of his day. He was not a systematic theologian, but he influenced theology; he was not a philosopher, but his writings deeply affected the philosophy of Christian education. Referred to by some as the "Beloved Heretic," Bushnell will long continue to make his mark upon American church life.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

The strengths of Bushnell's preaching are many. The clearest marks of his style are dignity and depth of thought: every sermon is thought-provoking; every sermon is impressive in its stately dignity of expression. Bushnell's persuasiveness was largely due to the authority given his sermons by his intellect. Though he had other virtues, this intellectual quality was his chief strength. In the early Bushnell there is much of fire and power; the later Bushnell is marked by dignity and restraint. But in both cases there is an unquestioned spiritual power and far-sightedness. Without exception he applies the great principles of Christ to the actual affairs of life with superb reasoning and insight.

The differences between the early sermons of Bushnell and the later sermons are interesting. One writer, himself a long-time member of Bushnell's church, says that the early sermons were both eager and powerful. His language had a "pure Saxon ring which it somewhat lost in later years." These early sermons were said to be marked by the "highest flights of eloquence"; wit and sarcasm flashed from his talks and speeches. In those days he stood as the most independent and muscular sermonizer in the American pulpit.

If his later preaching lacked the fiery quality, the urgency and willful force of the early days, it gained a subdued and poetic imagery. Too, there came to be a unity and clarity about the sermonic products of his later years that were not so evident in his earlier sermons.

Bushnell did not find his early days in the pastorate to be easy:

In the list of my qualifications at that time for a preacher of Christ, I have discovered nothing which moves my respect except the very small mustard seed of Christian experience I seem to have had, together with a certain honesty of determination to find, if possible, the truth; to violate the integrity of my understanding by no forced assent to received dogmas; to be warped by no fear of man, hurried by no impatience; never to go in advance of my convictions; and if possible, never to fall behind them.²

The traditional preaching responsibilities were a heavy burden for him. In order to preach three times on Sunday and once in the course of the week, he had to write steadily. After his first six weeks in the pastorate, the little stock of sermons that he had at the beginning was exhausted. He wrote to a friend: "The pressure of writing and preaching and visiting, subject to constant interruption, and all this seconded by the nervous agitation incident to a new place and a new business, has kept me continually tossing, and almost distracted me."³ Modern preachers may take encouragement that so notable a preacher as Bushnell endured the same perplexities which they face today.

2. Mary Bushnell Cheney, *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell* (New York: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1880), p. 68.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Although Bushnell himself may have felt confused and distracted, his sermons soon attracted attention. Of Bushnell's ordination sermon, his daughter wrote:

Many careless hearers listened earnestly for the first time. They felt that this Gospel was no utterance of platitudes, stale by repetition, no pleasant singsong of old words and phrases, but that a master in Israel had come to them; and to many this teaching was destined to be the power of God unto salvation.⁴

The honesty which he brought to his task, the earnest study which he devoted to it, the dedication to his convictions—these all bore fruit in profound sermons. From the outset he seemed destined to become one of America's most significant preachers.

His preaching was influenced by three significant events: two that were national, one that was personal. Politically, the country was torn by civil war and strife over the slavery issue. Theologically, a divisive struggle was being waged between the old New England conservatism and the newer liberalism. Both of these national issues involved both his thought and his preaching. The personal event that profoundly affected his preaching was the death of his infant son. Much of the coolness and detachment that had previously marked Bushnell's thinking disappeared after the death of his son. When questioned about the increase in the fervor of his preaching, he replied, "I have learned more of experimental religion since my little boy died than in all my life before."⁵ The sermons of Bushnell, always marked by careful thought, now bore the evidence of sympathetic understanding.

There were those who criticized Bushnell as brusque in manner, even rude in the midst of controversy. Bushnell could be incisive, no doubt sometimes distressingly so to his opponents. Nevertheless, there were others who spoke of him as "gentle" in his criticisms of the work of other men. Quite likely the truth of the matter is that Bushnell was like most men: sometimes objectively fair in his judgments, sometimes subjectively rude in his criticisms.

His style has also been criticized as "extravagant." The

4. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

most careful reading of his sermons fails to justify this comment; only a foppish elegance could regard these careful sermons as "extravagant."

The thinking of Bushnell may have been both revolutionary and radical—especially for his day—but he exercised a profound and practical influence on the people who heard him. A contemporary of his, another minister, said that after hearing him on Sunday men would often say, "I've heard a great sermon, and I'm going to make my week mean something." Every preacher, regardless of his theological persuasion, would like to hear that comment about his own preaching.

Sermons

UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE

“Then went in also that other disciple” (John 20:8).

IN THIS SLIGHT TOUCH or turn of history, is opened to us, if we scan closely, one of the most serious and fruitful chapters of Christian doctrine. Thus it is that men are ever touching unconsciously the springs of motion in each other; thus it is that one man, without thought or intention, or even a consciousness of the fact, is ever leading some other after him. Little does Peter think, as he comes up where his doubting brother is looking into the sepulcher, and goes straight in, after his peculiar manner, that he is drawing in his brother apostle after him. As little does John think, when he loses his misgivings, and goes into the sepulcher after Peter, that he is following his brother. And just so, unaware to himself, is every man, the whole race through, laying hold of his fellow-man, to lead him where otherwise he would not go. We overrun the boundaries of our personality—we flow together. A Peter leads a John, a John goes after Peter, both of them unconscious of any influence exerted or received. And thus our life and conduct are ever propagating themselves, by a law of social contagion, throughout the circles and times in which we live.

There are, then, you will perceive, two sorts of influence belonging to man; that which is active or voluntary, and that which is unconscious—that which we exert purposely or in the endeavor to sway another, as by teaching, by argument, by persuasion, by threatenings, by offers and promises, and that which flows out from us, unaware to ourselves, the same which Peter had over John when he led him into the sepulcher. The importance of our efforts to do good, that is of our voluntary influence, and the sacred obligation we are under to exert ourselves in this way, are often and seriously insisted on. It is thus that Christianity has become, in the present age, a principle of so much greater activity than it has been for many centuries before; and we fervently hope that it will yet become far more active than it now is, nor cease

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to multiply its industry, till it is seen by all mankind to embody the beneficence and the living energy of Christ Himself.

But there needs to be reproduced, at the same time, and partly for this object, a more thorough appreciation of the relative importance of that kind of influence or beneficence which is insensibly exerted. The tremendous weight and efficacy of this, compared with the other, and the sacred responsibility laid upon us in regard to this, are felt in no such degree or proportion as they should be; and the consequent loss we suffer in character, as well as that which the Church suffers in beauty and strength, is incalculable. The more stress, too, needs to be laid on this subject of insensible influence, because it is insensible; because it is out of mind, and, when we seek to trace it, beyond a full discovery.

If the doubt occur to any of you, in the announcement of this subject, whether we are properly responsible for an influence which we exert insensibly; we are not, I reply, except so far as this influence flows directly from our character and conduct. And this it does, even much more uniformly than our active influence. In the latter we may fail of our end by a want of wisdom or skill, in which case we are still as meritorious, in God's sight, as if we succeeded. So, again, we may really succeed, and do great good by our active endeavors, from motives altogether base and hypocritical, in which case we are as evil, in God's sight, as if we had failed. But the influences we exert unconsciously will almost never disagree with our real character. They are honest influences, following our character, as the shadow follows the sun. And, therefore, we are much more certainly responsible for them, and their effects on the world. They go streaming from us in all directions, though in channels that we do not see, poisoning or healing around the roots of society, and among the hidden wells of character. If good ourselves, they are good; if bad, they are bad. And, since they reflect so exactly our character, it is impossible to doubt our responsibility for their effects on the world. We must answer not only for what we do with a purpose, but for the influence we exert insensibly. To give you any just impressions of the breadth and seriousness of such a reckoning I know to be impossible. No mind can trace it. But it will be something gained if I am able to awaken only a suspicion of the vast extent and power of those influences, which are ever flowing out unbidden upon society, from your life and character.

In the prosecution of my design, let me ask of you, first of all, to expel the common prejudice that there can be nothing of consequence in unconscious influences, because they make no report, and fall on the world unobserved. Histories and biographies make little account of the power men exert insensibly over each other. They tell how men have led armies, established empires, enacted laws, gained causes, sung, reasoned, and taught—always occupied in setting forth what they do with a purpose. But what they do without purpose, the streams

of influence that flow out from their persons unbidden on the world, they can not trace or compute, and seldom even mention. So also the public laws make men responsible only for what they do with a positive purpose, and take no account of the mischiefs or benefits that are communicated by their noxious or healthful example. The same is true in the discipline of families, churches, and schools; they make no account of the things we do, except we will them. What we do insensibly passes for nothing, because no human government can trace such influences with sufficient certainty to make their authors responsible.

But you must not conclude that influences of this kind are insignificant, because they are unnoticed and noiseless. How is it in the natural world? Behind the mere show, the outward noise and stir of the world, nature always conceals her hand of control, and the laws by which she rules. Who ever saw with the eye, for example, or heard with the ear, the exertions of that tremendous astronomic force, which every moment holds the compact of the physical universe together? The lightning is, in fact, but a mere firefly spark in comparison; but, because it glares on the clouds, and thunders so terribly in the ear, and rives the tree or the rock where it falls, many will be ready to think that it is a vastly more potent agent than gravity.

The Bible calls the good man's life a light, and it is the nature of light to flow out spontaneously in all directions, and fill the world unconsciously with its beams. So the Christian shines, it would say, not so much because he will, as because he is a luminous object. Not that the active influence of Christians is made of no account in the figure, but only that this symbol of light has its propriety in the fact that their unconscious influence is the chief influence, and has the precedence in its power over the world. And yet, there are many who will be ready to think that light is a very tame and feeble instrument, because it is noiseless. An earthquake, for example, is to them a much more vigorous and effective agency. Hear how it comes thundering through solid foundations of nature. It rocks a whole continent. The noblest works of man—cities, monuments, and temples—are in a moment leveled to the ground, or swallowed down the opening gulfs of fire. Little do they think that the light of every morning, the soft, and genial, and silent light, is an agent many times more powerful. But let the light of the morning cease and return no more, let the hour of morning come, and bring with it no dawn; the outcries of a horror-stricken world fill the air, and make, as it were, the darkness audible. The beasts go wild and frantic at the loss of the sun. The vegetable growths turn pale and die. A chill creeps on, and frosty winds begin to howl across the freezing earth. Colder, and yet colder, is the night. The vital blood, at length, of all creatures, stops congealed. Down goes the frost toward the earth's center. The heart of the sea is frozen; nay, the earthquakes are themselves frozen in, under their fiery

caverns. The very globe itself, too, and all the fellow planets that have lost their sun, are become mere balls of ice, swinging silent in the darkness. Such is the light, which revisits us in the silence of the morning. It makes no shock or scar. It would not wake an infant in his cradle. And yet it perpetually new creates the world, rescuing it each morning, as a prey, from night and chaos. So the Christian is a light, even "the light of the world," and we must not think that, because he shines insensibly or silently, as a mere luminous object, he is therefore powerless. The greatest powers are ever those which lie back of the little stirrs and commotion of nature; and I verily believe that the insensible influences of good men are much more potent than what I have called their voluntary, or active, as the great silent powers of nature are of greater consequence than her little disturbances and tumults. The law of human influences is deeper than many suspect, and they lose sight of it altogether. The outward endeavors made by good men or bad to sway others, they call their influence; whereas, it is, in fact, but a fraction, and, in most cases, but a very small fraction, of the good or evil that flows out of their lives. Nay, I will even go further. How many persons do you meet, the insensible influence of whose manners and character is so decided as often to thwart their voluntary influence; so that, whatever they attempt to do, in the way of controlling others, they are sure to carry the exact opposite of what they intend! And it will generally be found that, where men undertake by argument or persuasion to exert a power, in the face of qualities that make them odious or detestable, or only not entitled to respect, their insensible influence will be too strong for them. The total effect of the life is then of a kind directly opposite to the voluntary endeavor, which, of course, does not add so much as a fraction to it.

I call your attention, next, to the twofold powers of effect and expression by which man connects with his fellow man. If we distinguish man as a creature of language, and thus qualified to communicate himself to others, there are in him two sets or kinds of language, one which is voluntary in the use, and one that is involuntary; that of speech in the literal sense, and that expression of the eye, the face, the look, the gait, the motion, the tone of cadence, which is sometimes called the natural language of the sentiments. This natural language, too, is greatly enlarged by the conduct of life, that which, in business and society, reveals the principles and spirit of men. Speech, or voluntary language, is a door to the soul, that we may open or shut at will; the other is a door that stands open evermore, and reveals to others constantly, and often very clearly, the tempers, tastes, and motives of their hearts. Within, as we may represent, is character, charging the common reservoir of influence, and through these twofold gates of the soul pouring itself out on the world. Out of one it flows at choice, and whensoever we purpose to do good

or evil to men. Out of the other it flows each moment, as light from the sun, and propagates itself in all beholders.

Then if we go to others, that is, to the subjects of influence, we find every man endowed with two inlets of impression; the ear and the understanding for the reception of speech, and the sympathetic powers, the sensibilities or affections, for tinder to those sparks of emotion revealed by looks, tones, manners and general conduct. And these sympathetic powers, though not immediately rational, are yet inlets, open on all sides, to the understanding and character. They have a certain wonderful capacity to receive impressions, and catch the meaning of signs, and propagate in us whatsoever falls into their passive molds from others. The impressions they receive do not come through verbal propositions, and are never received into verbal propositions, it may be, in the mind, and therefore many think nothing of them. But precisely on this account are they the more powerful, because it is as if one heart were thus going directly into another, and carrying in its feelings with it. Beholding, as in a glass, the feelings of our neighbor, we are changed into the same image, by the assimilating power of sensibility and fellow-feeling. Many have gone so far, and not without show, at least, of reason, as to maintain that the look or expression, and even the very features of children, are often changed by exclusive intercourse with nurses and attendants. Furthermore, if we carefully consider, we shall find it scarcely possible to doubt, that simply to look on bad and malignant faces, or those whose expressions have become infected by vice, to be with them and become familiarized to them, is enough permanently to affect the character of persons of mature age. I do not say that it must of necessity subvert their character, for the evil looked upon may never be loved or welcomed in practise; but it is something to have these bad images in the soul, giving out their expressions there, and diffusing their odor among the thoughts, as long as we live. How dangerous a thing is it, for example, for a man to become accustomed to sights of cruelty? What man, valuing the honor of his soul, would not shrink from yielding himself to such an influence? No more is it a thing of indifference to become accustomed to look on the manners, and receive the bad expression of any kind of sin.

The door of involuntary communication, I have said, is always open. Of course we are communicating ourselves in this way to others at every moment of our intercourse or presence with them. But how very seldom, in comparison, do we undertake by means of speech to influence others! Even the best Christian, one who most improves his opportunities to do good, attempts but seldom to sway another by voluntary influence, whereas he is all the while shining as a luminous object unawares, and communicating of his heart to the world.

But there is yet another view of this double line of communication which man has with his fellow-men, which is more general, and

displays the import of the truth yet more convincingly. It is by one of these modes of communication that we are constituted members of voluntary society, and by the other, parts of a general mass, or members of involuntary society. You are all, in a certain view, individuals, and separate as persons from each other; you are also in a certain other view, parts of a common body, as truly as the parts of a stone. Thus if you ask how it is that you and all men came without your consent to exist in society, to be within its power, to be under its laws, the answer is, that while you are a man, you are also a fractional element of a larger and more comprehensive being, called society—be it the family, the church, the state. In a certain department of your nature, it is open; its sympathies and feelings are open. On this open side you will adhere together, as parts of a larger nature, in which there is a common circulation of want, impulse, and law. Being thus made common to each other voluntarily, you become one mass, one consolidated social body, animated by one life. And observe how far this involuntary communication and sympathy between the members of a state or a family is sovereign over their character. It always results in what we call the national or family spirit; for there is a spirit peculiar to every state and family in the world. Sometimes, too, this national or family spirit takes a religious or an irreligious character, and appears almost to absorb the religious self-government of individuals. What was the national spirit of France, for example, at a certain time, but a spirit of infidelity? What is the religious spirit of Spain at this moment, but a spirit of bigotry, quite as wide of Christianity and destructive of character as the spirit of falsehood? What is the family spirit in many a house, but the spirit of gain, or pleasure, or appetite, in which everything that is warm, dignified, genial, and good in religion, is visibly absent? Sometimes you will almost fancy that you see the shapes of money in the eyes of children. So it is that we are led on by nations, as it were, to good or bad immortality. Far down in the secret foundations of life and society there lie concealed great laws and channels of influence, which make the race common to each other in all the main departments or divisions of the social mass, laws which often escape our notice altogether, but which are to society as gravity to the general system of God's works.

But these are general considerations, and more fit, perhaps, to give you a rational conception of the modes of influence and their relative power, than to verify that conception, or establish its truth. I now proceed to add, therefore, some miscellaneous proofs of a more particular nature.

And I mention, first of all, the instinct of imitation in children. We begin our mortal experience, not with acts grounded in judgment or reason, or with ideas received through language, but by simple imitation, and, under the guidance of this, we lay our foundations. The

child looks and listens, and whatsoever tone of feeling or manner of conduct is displayed around him, sinks into his plastic, passive soul, and becomes a mold of his being ever after. The very handling of the nursery is significant, and the petulance, the passion, the gentleness, the tranquillity indicated by it, are all reproduced in the child. His soul is a purely receptive nature, and that for a considerable period, without choice or selection. A little further on he begins voluntarily to copy everything he sees. Voice, manner, gait, everything which the eye sees, the mimic instinct delights to act over. And thus we have a whole generation of future men, receiving from us their beginnings, and the deepest impulses of their life and immortality. They watch us every moment, in the family, before the hearth, and at the table; and when we are meaning them no good or evil, when we are conscious of exerting no influence over them, they are drawing from us impressions and molds of habit, which, if wrong, no heavenly discipline can wholly remove; or, if right, no bad associations utterly dissipate. Now it may be doubted, I think, whether, in all the active influence of our lives, we do as much to shape the destiny of our fellow-men as we do in this single article of unconscious influence over children.

Still further on, respect for others takes the place of imitation. We naturally desire the approbation or good opinion of others. You see the strength of this feeling in the article of fashion. How few persons have the nerve to resist a fashion! We have fashions, too, in literature, and in worship, and in moral and religious doctrine, almost equally powerful. How many will violate the best rules of society, because it is the practise of the circle! How many reject Christ because of friends or acquaintance, who have no suspicion of the influence they exert, and will not have, till the last days show them what they have done! Every good man has thus a power in his person, more mighty than his words and arguments, and which others feel when he little suspects it. Every bad man, too, has a fund of poison in his character, which is tainting those around him, when it is not in his thoughts to do them injury. He is read and understood. His sensual tastes and habits, his unbelieving spirit, his suppressed leer at religions, have all a power, and take hold of the heart of others, whether he will have it so or not.

Again, how well understood is it that the most active feelings and impulses of mankind are contagious. How quick enthusiasm of any sort is to kindle, and how rapidly it catches from one to another, till a nation blazes in the flame! In the case of the Crusades you have an example where the personal enthusiasm of one man put all the states of Europe in motion. Fanaticism is almost equally contagious. Fear and superstition always infect the mind of the circle in which they are manifested. The spirit of war generally becomes an epidemic of mad-

ness, when once it has got possession of a few minds. The spirit of party is propagated in a similar manner. How any slight operation in the market may spread, like a fire, if successful, till trade runs wild in a general infatuation, is well known. Now, in all these examples, the effect is produced, not by active endeavor to carry influence, but mostly by that insensible propagation which follows, when a flame of any kind is once more kindled.

Is it also true, you may ask, that the religious spirit propagates itself or tends to propagate itself in the same way? I see no reason to question that it does. Nor does anything in the doctrine of spiritual influences, when rightly understood, forbid the supposition. For spiritual influences are never separated from the laws of thought in the individual, and the laws of feeling and influence in society. If, too, every disciple is to be an "epistle known and read of all men," what shall we expect, but that all men will be somehow affected by the reading? Or if he is to be a light in the world, what shall we look for, but that others, seeing his good works, shall glorify God on his account? How often is it seen, too, as a fact of observation, that one or a few good men kindle at length a holy fire in the community in which they live, and become the leaven of general reformation! Such men give a more vivid proof in their persons of the reality of religious faith than any words or arguments could yield. They are active; they endeavor, of course, to exert a good voluntary influence; but still their chief power lies in their holiness and the sense they produce in others of their close relation to God.

It now remains to exhibit the very important fact, that where the direct or active influence of men is supposed to be great, even this is due, in a principal degree, to that insensible influence by which their arguments, reproofs, and persuasions are secretly invigorating. It is not mere words which turn men; it is the heart mounting, uncalled, into the expression of the features; it is the eye illuminated by reason, the look beaming with goodness; it is the tone of the voice, that instrument of the soul, which changes quality with such amazing facility, and gives out in the soft, the tender, the tremulous, the firm, every shade of emotion and character. And so much is there in this, that the moral stature and character of the man that speaks are likely to be well represented in his manner. If he is a stranger, his way will inspire confidence and attract good will. His virtues will be seen, as it were, gathering round him to minister words and forms of thought, and their voices will be heard in the fall of his cadences. And the same is true of bad men, or men who have nothing in their character corresponding to what they attempt to do. If without heart or interest you attempt to move another, the involuntary man tells what you are doing in a hundred ways at once. A hypocrite, endeavoring to exert a good influence, only tries to convey by words what the

lying look, and the faithless affectation, or dry exaggeration of his manner perpetually resists. We have it for a fashion to attribute great or even prodigious results to the voluntary efforts and labors of men. Whatever they effect is commonly referred to nothing but the immediate power of what they do. Let us take an example, like that of Paul, and analyze it. Paul was a man of great fervor and enthusiasm. He combined, withal, more of what is lofty and morally commanding in his character, than most of the very distinguished men of the world. Having this for his natural character, and his natural character exalted and made luminous by Christian faith, and the manifest indwelling of God, he had of course an almost superhuman sway over others. Doubtless he was intelligent, strong in argument, eloquent, active, to the utmost of his powers, but still he moved the world more by what he was than by what he did. The grandeur and spiritual splendor of his character were ever adding to his active efforts an element of silent power, which was the real and chief cause of their efficacy. He convinced, subdued, inspired, and led, because of the half-divine authority which appeared in his conduct, and his glowing spirit. He fought the good fight, because he kept the faith, and filled his powerful nature with influences drawn from higher worlds.

And here I must conduct you to a yet higher example, even that of the Son of God, the light of the world. Men dislike to be swayed by direct, voluntary influence. They are jealous of such control, and are therefore best approached by conduct and feeling, and the authority of simple worth, which seem to make no purposed onset. If goodness appears, they welcome its celestial smile; if heaven descends to encircle them, they yield to its sweetness; if truth appears in the life, they honor it with a secret homage; if personal majesty and glory appear, they bow with reverence, and acknowledge with shame their own vileness. Now it is on this side of human nature that Christ visits us, preparing just that kind of influence which the spirit of truth may wield with the most persuasive and subduing effect. It is the grandeur of His character which constitutes the chief power of His ministry, not His miracles or teachings apart from His character. Miracles were useful, at the time, to arrest attention, and His doctrine is useful at all times as the highest revelation of truth possible in speech; but the greatest truth of the gospel, notwithstanding, is Christ Himself—a human body becomes the organ of the divine nature, and reveals, under the conditions of an earthly life, the glory of God! The Scripture writers have much to say, in this connection, of the image of God; and an image, you know, is that which simply represents, not that which acts, or reasons, or persuades. Now it is this image of God which makes the center, the sun itself, of the gospel. The journeyings, teachings, miracles, and sufferings of Christ, all had their use in bringing out this image, or what is the same,

in making conspicuous the character and feelings of God, both toward sinners and toward sin. And here is the power of Christ—it is that God's beauty, love, truth, and justice shines through Him. It is the influence which flows unconsciously and spontaneously out of Christ, as the friend of man, the light of the world, the glory of the Father, made visible. And some have gone so far as to conjecture that God made the human person, originally, with a view to its becoming the organ or vehicle by which He might reveal His communicable attributes to other worlds. Christ, they believe, came to inhabit this organ, that He might execute a purpose so sublime. The human person is constituted, they say, to be a mirror of God; and God, being imaged in that mirror, as in Christ, is held up to the view of this and other worlds. It certainly is to the view of this; and if the Divine nature can use the organ so effectively to express itself unto us, if it can bring itself, through the looks, tones, motions, and conduct of a human person, more close to our sympathies than by any other means, how can we think that an organ so communicative, inhabited by us, is not always breathing our spirit and transferring our image insensibly to others?

I have protracted the argument on this subject beyond what I could have wished, but I can not dismiss it without suggesting a few thoughts necessary to its complete practical effect.

One very obvious and serious inference from it, and the first which I will name, is, that it is impossible to live in this world and escape responsibility. It is not that they alone, as you have seen, who are trying purposely to convert or corrupt others, who exert an influence; you can not live without exerting influence. The doors of your soul are open on others, and theirs on you. You inhabit a house which is well-nigh transparent; and what you are within, you are ever showing yourself to be without, by signs that have no ambiguous expression. If you had the seeds of a pestilence in your body, you would not have a more active contagion than you have in your tempers, tastes, and principles. Simply to be in this world, whatever you are, is to exert an influence—an influence, too, compared with which mere language and persuasion are feeble. You say that you mean well; at least, you think you mean to injure no one. Do you injure no one? Is your example harmless? Is it ever on the side of God and duty? You can not reasonably doubt that others are continually receiving impressions from your character. As little you can doubt that you must answer for these impressions. If the influence you exert is unconsciously exerted, then it is only the most sincere, the truest expression of your character. And for what can you be held responsible, if not for this? Do not deceive yourselves in the thought that you are at least doing no injury, and are, therefore, living without responsibility; first, make it sure that you are not every hour infusing moral death insensibly into your children, wives, husbands, friends, and acquaintances. By a mere look or glance,

not unlikely, you are conveying the influence that shall turn the scale of some one's immortality. Dismiss, therefore, the thought that you are living without responsibility; that is impossible. Better is it frankly to admit the truth; and if you will risk the influence of a character unsanctified by duty and religion, prepare to meet your reckoning manfully, and receive the just recompense of reward.

The true philosophy or method of doing good is also here explained. It is, first of all and principally, to be good—to have a character that will of itself communicate good. There must and will be active effort where there is goodness of principle; but the latter we should hold to be the principal thing, the root and life of all. Whether it is a mistake more sad or more ridiculous, to make mere stir synonymous with doing good, we need not inquire; enough, to be sure that one who has taken up such a notion of doing good, is for that reason a nuisance to the Church. The Christian is called a light, not lightning. In order to act with effect on others, he must walk in the Spirit, and thus become the image of goodness; he must be so akin to God, and so filled with His dispositions, that he shall seem to surround himself with a hallowed atmosphere. It is folly to endeavor to make ourselves shine before we are luminous. If the sun without his beams should talk to the planets, and argue with them till the final day, it would not make them shine; there must be light in the sun itself; and then they will shine, of course. And this, my brethren, is what God intends for you all. It is the great idea of His gospel, and the work of His spirit, to make you lights in the world. His greatest joy is to give you character, to beautify your example, to exalt your principles, and make you each the depository of His own almighty grace. But in order to do this, something is necessary on your part—a full surrender of your mind to duty and to God, and a perpetual desire of this spiritual intimacy; having this, having a participation thus of the goodness of God, you will as naturally communicate good as the sun communicates his beams.

Our doctrine of unconscious and undesigning influence shows how it is, also, that the preaching of Christ is often unfruitful, and especially in times of spiritual coldness. It is not because truth ceases to be truth, nor, of necessity, because it is preached in a less vivid manner, but because there are so many influences preaching against the preacher. He is one, the people are many; his attempt to convince and persuade is a voluntary influence; their lives, on the other hand, and especially the lives of those who profess what is better, are so many unconscious influences ever streaming forth upon the people, and back and forth between each other. He preaches the truth, and they, with one consent, are preaching the truth down; and how can he prevail against so many, and by a kind of influence so unequal? When the people of God are glowing with spiritual devotion to Him, and love to men, the case is different; then they are all preaching with the

preacher, and making an atmosphere of warmth for his words to fall in; great is the company of them that publish the truth, and proportionally great its power. Shall I say more? Have you not already felt, my brethren, the application to which I would bring you? We do not exonerate ourselves; we do not claim to be nearer to God or holier than you; but, ah! you know how easy it is to make a winter about us, or how cold it feels! Our endeavor is to preach the truth of Christ and His cross as clearly and as forcefully as we can. Sometimes it has a visible effect, and we are filled with joy; sometimes it has no effect, and then we struggle on, as we must, but under great oppression. Have we none among you that preach against us in your lives? If we show you the light of God's truth, does it never fall on banks of ice; which if the light shows through, the crystal masses are yet as cold as before? We do not accuse you; that we leave to God, and to those who may rise up in the last day to testify against you. If they shall come out of your own families; if they are the children that wear your names, the husband or wife of your affections; if they declare that you, by your example, kept them away from Christ's truth and mercy, we may have accusations to meet of our own, and we leave you to acquit yourselves as best you may. I only warn you, here, of the guilt which our Lord Jesus Christ will impute to them that hinder His gospel.

EVERY MAN'S LIFE A PLAN OF GOD

"I girded thee, though thou has not known me" (Isaiah 45:5).

So BEAUTIFUL is the character and history of Cyrus, the person here addressed, that many have doubted whether the sketch given by Xenophon was not intended as an idealizing, or merely romantic picture. And yet, there have been examples of as great beauty unfolded, here and there, in all the darkest recesses of the heathen world, and it accords entirely with the hypothesis of historic verity in

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the account given us of this remarkable man, that he is designated and named by our prophet, even before he is born, as a chosen foster-son of God. "I have surnamed thee," he declares, "I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me." And what should he be but a model of all princely beauty, of bravery, of justice, of impartial honor to the lowly, of greatness and true magnanimity in every form, when God has girded him, unseen, to be the minister of his own great and sovereign purposes to the nations of his time.

Something of the same kind will also be detected in the history and personal consciousness of almost every great and remarkable character. Christ himself testifies to the girding of the Almighty, when he says,— "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world." Abraham was girded for a particular work and mission, in what is otherwise denominated his call. Joseph, in Egypt, distinguishes the girding of God's hand, when he comforts his guilty brothers in the assurance,— "So, it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Moses and Samuel were even called by name, and set to their great life-work, in the same manner. And what is Paul endeavoring, in all the stress and pressure of his mighty apostleship, but to perform the work for which God's Spirit girded him at his call, and to apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus? And yet these great master-spirits of the world are not so much distinguished, after all, by the acts they do, as by the sense itself of some mysterious girding of the Almighty upon them, whose behests they are set to fulfill. And all men may have this; for the humblest and commonest have a place and a work assigned them, in the same manner, and have it for their privilege to be always ennobled in the same lofty consciousness. God is girding every man for a place and a calling, in which, taking it from him, even though it be internally humble, he may be as consciously exalted as if he held the rule of a kingdom. The truth I propose then for your consideration is this,—

That God has a definite life-plan for every human person, girding him, visibly or invisibly, for some exact thing, which it will be the true significance and glory of his life to have accomplished.

Many persons, I am well aware, never even think of any such thing. They suppose that, for most men, life is a necessarily stale and common affair. What it means for them they do not know, and they scarcely conceive that it means any thing. They even complain, venting heavy sighs, that, while some few are set forward by God to do great works and fill important places, they are not allowed to believe that there is any particular object in their existence. It is remarkable, considering how generally this kind of impression prevails, that the Holy Scriptures never give way to it, but seem, as it were, in all possible ways, to be holding up the dignity of common life, and giving a meaning to its appointments, which the natural dullness and lowness of mere human opinion can not apprehend.

They not only show us explicitly, as we have seen, that God has a definite purpose in the lives of men already great, but they show us how frequently, in the conditions of obscurity and depression, preparations of counsel going on, by which the commonest offices are to become the necessary first chapter of a great and powerful history. David among the sheep; Elisha following after the plough; Nehemiah bearing the cup; Hannah, who can say nothing less common than that she is the wife of Elkanah and a woman of a sorrowful spirit—who, that looks on these humble people, at their humble post of service, and discovers at last, how dear a purpose God was cherishing in them, can be justified in thinking that God has no particular plan for him, because he is not signalized by any kind of distinction?

Besides, what do the scriptures show us, but that God has a particular care for every man, a personal interest in him and a sympathy with him and his trials, watching for the uses of his one talent as attentively and kindly and approving him as heartily, in the right employment of it, as if he had given him ten; and, what is the giving out of the talents itself, but an exhibition of the fact that God has a definite purpose, charge and work, be it this or that, for every man?

They also make it the privilege of every man to live in the secret guidance of God; which is plainly nugatory, unless there is some chosen work, or sphere, into which he may be guided; for how shall God guide him, having nothing appointed or marked out for him to be guided into? No field opened for him, no course set down which is to be his wisdom?

God also professes in his Word to have purposes pre-arranged for all events; to govern by a plan which is from eternity even, and which, in some proper sense, comprehends every thing. And what is this but another way of conceiving that God has a definite place and plan adjusted for every human being? And, without such a plan, he could not even govern the world intelligently, or make a proper universe of the created system; for it becomes a universe only in the grand unity of reason, which includes it. Otherwise, it were only a jumble of fortuities, without counsel, end or law.

Turning, now, from the scriptures to the works of God, how constantly are we met here by the fact, everywhere visible, that ends and uses are the regulative reasons of all existing things. This we discover often, when we are least able to understand the speculative mystery of objects; for it is precisely the *uses* of things that are most palpable. These uses are to God, no doubt, as to us, the significance of his works. And they compose, taken together, a grand reciprocal system, in which part answers actively to part, constructing thus an all-comprehensive and glorious whole. And the system is, in fact, so perfect, that the loss or displacement of any member would fatally derange the general order. If there were any smallest star in heaven that had no place to

fill, that oversight would beget a disturbance which no Leverrier could compute; because it would be a real and eternal, not merely casual or apparent disorder. One grain, more or less, of sand would disturb, or even fatally disorder the whole scheme of the heavenly motions. So nicely balanced, and so carefully hung, are the worlds, that even the grains of their dust are counted, and their places adjusted to a correspondent nicety. There is nothing included in the gross, or total sum, that could be dispensed with. The same is true in regard to forces that are apparently irregular. Every particle of air is moved by laws of as great precision as the laws of the heavenly bodies, or, indeed, by the same laws; keeping its appointed place, and serving its appointed use. Every odor exhales in the nicest conformity with its appointed place and law. Even the viewless and mysterious heat, stealing through the dark centers and impenetrable depths of the worlds, obeys its uses with unflinching exactness, dissolving never so much as an atom that was not to be dissolved. What now shall we say of man, appearing, as it were, in the center of this great circle uses? They are all adjusted for him: has he, then, no ends appointed for himself? Noblest of all creatures, and closest to God, as he certainly is, are we to say that his Creator has no definite thoughts concerning him, no place prepared for him to fill, no use for him to serve, which is the reason of his existence?

There is, then, I conclude, a definite and proper end, or issue, for every man's existence; an end, which, to the heart of God, is the good intended for him, or for which he was intended; that which he is privileged to become, called to become, ought to become; that which God will assist him to become and which he can not miss, save by his own fault. Every human soul has a complete and perfect plan, cherished for it in the heart of God—a divine biography marked out, which it enters into life to live. This life, rightly unfolded, will be a complete and beautiful whole, an experience led on by God and unfolded by his secret nurture, as the trees and the flowers, by the secret nurture of the world; a drama cast in the mould of a perfect art, with no part wanting; a divine study for the man himself, and for others; a study that shall forever unfold, in wondrous beauty, the love and faithfulness of God; great in its conception, great in the Divine skill by which it is shaped; above all, great in the momentous and glorious issues it prepares. What a thought is this for every human soul to cherish! What dignity does it add to life! What support does it bring to the trials of life! What instigations does it add to send us onward in every thing that constitutes our excellence! We live in the Divine thought. We fill a place in the great everlasting plan of God's intelligence. We never sink below his care, never drop out of his counsel.

But there is, I must add, a single but very important and even

fearful qualification. Things serve their uses, and never break out of their place. They have no power to do it. Not so with us. We are able, as free beings, to refuse the place and the duties God appoints; which, if we do, then we sink into something lower and less worthy of us. That highest and best condition for which God designed us is no more possible. We are fallen out of it, and it can not be wholly recovered. And yet, as that was the best thing possible for us in the reach of God's original counsel, so there is a place designed for us now, which is the next best possible. God calls us now to the best thing left, and will do so till all good possibility is narrowed down and spent. And then, when he can not use us any more for our own good, he will use us for the good of others—an example of the misery and horrible desperation to which any soul must come, when all the good ends, and all the holy callings of God's friendly and fatherly purpose are exhausted. Or it may be now that, remitting all other plans and purposes in our behalf, he will henceforth use us, wholly against our will, to be the demonstration of his justice and avenging power before the eyes of mankind; saying over us, as he did over Pharaoh in the day of his judgments, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Doubtless, He had other and more genial plans to serve in this bad man, if only he could have accepted such; but knowing his certain rejection of these, God turned his mighty counsel in him wholly on the use to be made of him as a reprobate. How many Pharaohs in common life refuse every other use God will make of them, choosing only to figure, in their small way, as reprobates; and descending, in that manner, to fate that painfully mimics his.

God has, then, I conclude, a definite life-plan set for every man; one that, being accepted and followed, will conduct him to the best and noblest end possible. No qualification of this doctrine is needed, save the fearful one just named; that we, by our perversity, so often refuse to take the place and do the work he gives us.

It follows, in the same way, that, as God, in fixing on our end or use, will choose the best end or use possible, so he will appoint for us the best manner possible of attaining it; for, as it is a part of God's perfection to choose the best things, and not things partially good, so it will be in all the methods he prescribes for their attainment. And so, as you pass on, stage by stage, in your courses of experience, it is made clear to you that, whatever you have laid upon you to do or to suffer, whatever to want, whatever to surrender or to conquer, is exactly best for you. Your life is a school, exactly adapted to your lesson, and that to the best, last end of your existence.

No room for a discouraged or depressed feeling, therefore, is left you. Enough that you exist for a purpose high enough to give meaning to life, and to support a genuine inspiration. If your sphere is out-

wardly humble, if it even appears to be quite insignificant, God understands it better than you do, and it is a part of his wisdom to bring out great sentiments in humble conditions, great principles in works that are outwardly trivial, great characters under great adversities and heavy loads of encumbrance. The tallest saints of God will often be those who walk in the deepest obscurity, and are even despised or overlooked by man. Let it be enough that God is in your history and that the plan of the biography is His, the issue that He has set for it the highest and the best. Away then, O man, with thy feeble complaints and feverish despondencies. There is no place left for this kind of nonsense. Let it fill thee with cheerfulness and exalted feeling, however deep in obscurity your lot may be, that God is leading you on, girding you for a work, preparing you to a good that is worthy of his Divine magnificence. If God is really preparing us at all to become that which is the very highest and best thing possible, there ought never to be a discouraged or uncheerful being in the world.

Nor is it any detraction from such a kind of life that the helm of its guidance is, by the supposition, to be in God, and not in our own will and wisdom. This, in fact, is its dignity: it is a kind of divine order, a creation moulded by the loving thoughts of God; in that view, to the man himself a continual discovery, as it is unfolded both of himself and God. A discovery of some kind it must be to all; for, however resolutely or defiantly we undertake to accomplish our own objects, and cut our own way through to a definite self-appointed future, it will never be true, for one moment, that we are certain of this future, and will almost always be true that we are met by changes and conditions unexpected. This, in fact, is one of the common mitigations even of a selfish and self-directed life, that its events come up out of the unknown and overtake the subject, as discoveries he could not shun, or anticipate. Evil itself is far less evil, even to the worldly man, that it comes by surprises. Were the scenes of necessary bitterness, wrong, trial, disappointment, self-accusation, every such man has to pass through in his life, distinctly set before him at the beginning, how forbidding generally, and how dismal the prospect. We say, therefore, how frequently, "I could not have endured these distasteful, painful years, these emptinesses, these trials and torments that have rent me, one after another, if I had definitely known beforehand what kind of lot was before me." And yet, how poor a comfort is it to such pains and disasters that they overtook the sufferer as surprises and sorrows not set down beforehand in the self-appointed programme of life. How different, how inspiring and magnificent, instead, to live, by holy consent, a life all discovery; to see it unfolding, moment by moment, a plan of God, our own life-plan conceived in his paternal love; each event, incident, experience, whether bright or dark, having its mission from him, and revealing, either now or in its future issues,

the magnificence of his favoring counsel; to be sure, in the dark day, of a light that will follow, that loss will terminate in gain, that trial will issue in rest, doubt in satisfaction, suffering in patience, patience in purity, and all in a consummation of greatness and dignity that even God will look on with a smile. How magnificent, how strong in its repose, how full of rest is such a kind of life! Call it human still, decry it, let it down by whatever diminutives can be invented, still it is great; a charge which ought even to inspire a dull-minded man with energy and holy enthusiasm.

But, the inquiry will be made, supposing all this to be true in the manner stated, how can we ever get hold of this life-plan God has made for us, or find our way into it? Here, to many, if not all, will be the main stress of doubt and practical suspense.

Observe, then, first of all, some negatives that are important and must be avoided. They are these:

You will never come into God's plan if you study singularity; for, if God has a design or plan for every man's life, then it is exactly appropriate to his nature; and, as every man's nature is singular and peculiar to himself—as peculiar as his face or look—then it follows that God will lead every man into a singular, original and peculiar life, without any study of singularity on his part. Let him seek to be just what God will have him, and the talents, the duties and circumstances of his life will require him to be, and then he will be just peculiar enough. He will have a life of his own; a life that is naturally and, therefore, healthily peculiar; a simple, unaffected, unambitious life, whose plan is not in himself, but in God.

As little will he seek to copy the life of another. No man is ever called to be another. God has as many plans for men as he has men; and, therefore, he never requires them to measure their life exactly by any other life. We are not to require it of ourselves to have the precise feelings, or exercises, or do the works, or pass through the trials of other men; for God will handle us according to what we are, and not according to what other men are. And whoever undertakes to be exercised by any given fashion, or to be any given character, such as he knows or has read of, will find it impossible, even as it is to make himself another nature. God's plan must hold and we must seek no other. To strain after something new and peculiar is fantastic and weak, and is also as nearly wicked as that kind of weakness can be. To be a copyist, working at the reproduction of a human model, is to have no faith in one's significance, to judge that God means nothing in his particular life, but only in the life of some other man. Submitting himself, in this manner, to the fixed opinion that his life means nothing, and that nothing is left for him but to borrow or beg a life-plan from some other man, what can the copyist become but an affection or a dull imposture.

In this view also, you are never to complain of your birth, your training, your employments, your hardships; never to fancy that you could be something if only you had a different lot and sphere assigned you. God understands his own plan, and he knows what you want a great better than you do. The very things that you most deprecate, as fatal limitations or obstructions, are probably what you most want. What you call hindrances, obstacles, discouragements, are probably God's opportunities; and it is nothing new that the patient should dislike his medicines, or any certain proof that they are poisons. No! A truce to all such impatience! Choke the devilish envy which gnaws at your heart, because you are not in the same lot with others; bring down your soul, or, rather, bring it up to receive God's will and do his work, in your lot, in your sphere, under your cloud of obscurity, against your temptations; and then you shall find that your condition is never opposed to your good, but really consistent with it. Hence it was that an apostle required his converts to abide each one in that calling wherein he was called; to fill his place till he opens a way, by filling it, to some other; the bondman to fill his house of bondage with love and duty, the laborer to labor, the woman to be a woman, the men to show themselves men—all to acknowledge God's hand in their lot, and seek to cooperate with that good design which he most assuredly cherishes for them.

Another frequent mistake to be carefully avoided is that, while you surrender and renounce all thought of making up a plan, or choosing out a plan, for yourself, as one that you set by your own will, you also give up the hope or expectation that God will set you in any scheme of life, where the whole course of it will be known, or set down beforehand. If you go to him to be guided, he will guide you; but he will not comfort your distrust, or half trust of him, by showing you the chart of all his purposes concerning you. He will only show you into a way where, if you go cheerfully and trustfully forward, he will show you on still further. No contract will be made with you save that he engages, if you trust him, to lead you into the best things, all the way through. And, if they are better than you can either ask or think beforehand, they will be none the worse for that.

But we must not stop in negatives. How, then, or by what more positive directions can a man, who really desires to do it, come into the plan God lays for him, so as to live it and rationally believe that he does? You are on the point of choosing, it may be, this or that calling, wanting to know where duty lies and what the course God himself would have you take. Beginning at a point most remote, and where the generality of truth is widest,

Consider (1) the character of God, and you will draw a large deduction from that; for, all that God designs for you will be in harmony with his character. He is a being infinitely good, just, true. Therefore,

you are to know that he cannot really seek any thing contrary to this in you. You may make yourselves contrary, in every attribute of character, to God; but he never made you to become any thing different from, or unworthy of, himself. A good being could not make another to be a bad being, as the proper issue and desired end of his existence; least of all could one infinitely good. A great many employments or callings are, by these first principles, forever cut off. No thought is permitted you, even for a moment, of any work or calling that does not represent the industry, justice, truth, beneficence, mercy of God.

(2) Consider relation to him as a creature. All created wills have their natural center and rest in God's will. In him they all come into a play of harmony, and the proper harmony of being is possible only in this way. Thus, you know that you are called to have a will perfectly harmonized with God's and rested in his, and that gives you a large insight into what you are to be, or what is the real end of your being. In fact, nine-tenths of your particular duties may be settled, at once, by a simple reference in this manner to what God wills.

(3) You have a conscience, which is given to be an interpreter of his will and thus of your duty, and, in both, of what you are to become.

(4) God's law and his written Word are guides to present duty, which, if faithfully accepted, will help to set you in accordance with the mind of God and the plan he has laid for you. "I am a stranger in the earth," said one, "hide not thy commandments from me"; knowing that God's commandments would give him a clue to the true meaning and business of his life.

(5) Be an observer of Providence; for God is showing you ever, by the way in which he leads you, whither he means to lead. Study your trials, your talents, the world's wants, and stand ready to serve God now, in whatever he brings to your hand.

Again (6), consult your friends, and especially those who are most in the teaching of God. They know your talents and personal qualifications better, in some respects, than you do yourself. Ask their judgment of you and the spheres and works to which you are best adapted.

Once more (7) go to God himself, and ask for the calling of God; for, as certainly as he has a plan or calling for you, he will somehow guide you into it. And this is the proper office and work of his Spirit. By this private teaching he can show us, and will, into the very plan that is set for us. And this is the significance of what is prescribed as our duty, viz., living and walking in the Spirit; for the Spirit of God is a kind of universal presence, or inspiration, in the world's bosom; an unfailing inner light, which if we accept and live in, we are guided thereby into a consenting choice, so that what God wills for us we also will for ourselves—settling into it as the needle to the pole. By this hidden union with God, or intercourse with him, we get a wisdom or

insight deeper than we know ourselves; a sympathy, a oneness with the Divine will and love. We go into the very plan of God for us, and are led along in it by him, consenting, cooperating, answering to him, we know not how, and working out, with nicest exactness, that good end for which his unseen counsel girded us and sent us into the world. In this manner, not neglecting the other methods just named, but gathering in all their separate lights, to be interpreted in the higher light of the Spirit, we can never be greatly at a loss to find our way into God's counsel and plan. The duties of the present moment we shall meet as they rise and these will open a gate into the next, and we shall thus pass on, trustfully and securely, almost never in doubt as to what God calls us to do.

It is not to be supposed that you have followed me, in such a subject as this, without encountering questions from within that are piercing. It has put you on reflection; it has set you to the inquiry, what you have been doing and becoming thus far in your course, and what you are hereafter to be? Ten, twenty, fifty, seventy years ago, you came into this living world, and began to breathe this mortal air. The guardian angel that came to take charge of you said, "To this end is he born, for this cause is he come into the world." Or, if this be a Jewish fancy, God said the same himself. He had a definite plan for you, a good end settled and cherished for you in his heart. This it was that gave a meaning and glory to your life. Apart from this, it was not, in his view, life for you to live; it was accident, frustration, death. What now, O soul, hast thou done? what progress hast thou made? how much of the blessed life-plan of thy Father hast thou executed? How far on thy way art thou to the good, best end thy God has designed for thee?

Do I hear thy soul confessing, with a suppressed sob within thee, that, up to this time, thou hast never sought God's chosen plan at all? Hast thou, even to this hour, and during so many years, been following a way and a plan of thine own, regardless, hitherto, of all God's purposes in thee? Well, if it be so, what hast thou gotten? How does thy plan work? Does it bring thee peace, content, dignity of aim and feeling, purity, rest; or, does it plunge thee into mires of disturbance, scorch thee in flames of passion, worry thee with cares, burden thee with bitter reflections, cross thee, disappoint, sadden, sour thee? And what are thy prospects? what is the issue to come? After thou hast worked out this hard plan of thine own, will it come to a good end? Hast thou courage now to go on and work it through?

Perhaps you may be entertaining yourself, for the time, with a notion of your prosperity, counting yourself happy in past successes, and counting on greater successes to come. Do you call it, then, success, that you are getting on in a plan of your own? There can not be a greater delusion. You set up a plan that is not God's, and rejoice that

it seems to prosper; not observing that you are just as much farther off from God's plan for you and from all true wisdom, as you seem to prosper more. And the day is coming when just this truth will be revealed to you, as the bitterest pang of your defeat and shame.

No matter which it be, prosperity or acknowledged defeat, the case is much the same in one as in the other, if you stand apart from God and his counsel. There is nothing good preparing for any man who will not live in God's plan. If he goes a prospecting for himself, and will not apprehend that for which he is apprehended, it can not be to any good purpose.

And really, I know not any thing, my hearers, more sad and painful to think of, to a soul properly enlightened by reason and God's truth, than so many years of Divine good squandered and lost; whole years, possibly many years, of that great and blessed biography which God designed for you, occupied by a frivolous and foolish invention of your own, substituted for the good counsel of God's infinite wisdom and love. O, let the past suffice!

Young man, or woman, this is the day of hope to you. All your best opportunities are still before you. Now, too, you are laying your plans for the future. Why not lay them in God? Who has planned for you as wisely and faithfully as he? Let your life begin with him. Believe that you are girded by your God for a holy and great calling. Go to him and consecrate your life to him, knowing assuredly that he will lead you into just that life which is your highest honor and blessing.

And what shall I say to the older man, who is further on his course and is still without God in the world? The beginning of wisdom, my friend, you have yet to learn. You have really done nothing, as yet, that you were sent into the world to do. All your best opportunities, too, are gone or going by. The best end, the next best, and the next are gone, and nothing but the dregs of opportunity is left. And still Christ calls even you. There is a place still left for you; not the best and brightest, but an humble and good one. To this you are called, for this you are apprehended of Christ Jesus still. O, come, repent of your dusty and dull and weary way, and take the call that is offered.

All men, living without God, are adventurers out upon God's world, in neglect of him, to choose their own course. Hence the sorrowful, sad looking host they make. O, that I could show them whence their bitterness, their dryness, their unutterable sorrows, come. O, that I could silence, for one hour, the noisy tumult of their works, and get them to look in upon that better, higher life of fruitfulness and blessing to which their God has appointed them. Will they ever see it? Alas! I fear!

Friends of God, disciples of the Son of God, how inspiring and magnificent the promise, or privilege, that is offered here to you!

Does it still encounter only unbelief in your heart? does it seem to you impossible that you can ever find your way into a path prepared for you by God, and be led along in it by his mighty counsel? Let me tell you a secret. It requires a very close well-kept life to do this; a life in which the soul can have confidence always toward God; a life which allows the Spirit always to abide and reign, driven away by no affront of selfishness. There must be a complete renunciation of self-will. God and religion must be practically first; and the testimony that we please God must be the element of our peace. And such a disciple I have never known who did not have it for his joy that God was leading him on, shaping his life for him, bringing him along out of one moment into the next, year by year. To such a disciple, there is nothing strained or difficult in saying that God's plan can be found, or that this is the true mode and privilege of life. Nothing to him is easier or more natural. He knows God ever present, feels that God determines all things for him, rejoices in the confidence that the everlasting counsel of his Friend is shaping every turn of his experience. He does not go hunting after this confidence; it comes to him, abides in him, fortifies his breast, and makes his existence itself an element of peace. And this, my brethren, is your privilege, if only you can live close enough to have the secret of the Lord with you.

How sacred, how strong in its repose, how majestic, how nearly divine is a life thus ordered! The simple thought of a life which is to be the unfolding, in this manner, of a Divine plan, is too beautiful, too captivating, to suffer one indifferent or heedless moment. Living in this manner, every turn of your experience will be a discovery to you of God, every change a token of his Fatherly counsel. Whatever obscurity, darkness, trial, suffering falls upon you; your defeats, losses, injuries; your outward state, employment, relations; what seems hard, unaccountable, severe, or, as nature might say, vexatious—all these you will see are parts of constitutive elements in God's beautiful and good plan for you, and, as such, are to be accepted with a smile.

Trust God! have an implicit trust in God! and these very things will impart the highest zest to life. If you were in your own will, you could not bear them; and if you fall, at any time, into your own will, they will break you down. But, the glory of your condition, as a Christian, is that you are in the mighty and good will of God. Hence it was that Bunyan called his hero Great Heart; for, no heart can be weak that is in the confidence of God. See how it was with Paul: counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge; enduring with godlike patience, unspeakable sufferings; casting every thing behind him, and following on to apprehend that for which he was apprehended. He had a great and mighty will, but no self-will: therefore, he was strong, a true lion of the faith. Away, then, with all feeble

complaints, all meagre and mean anxieties. Take your duty, and be strong in it, as God will make you strong. The harder it is, the stronger, in fact, you will be. Understand, also, that the great question here is, not what you will get, but what you will become. The greatest wealth you can ever get will be in yourself. Take your burdens, and troubles, and losses, and wrongs, if come they must and will, as your opportunities, knowing that God has girded you for greater things than these.

O, to live out such a life as God appoints, how great a thing it is! —to do the duties, make the sacrifices, bear the adversities, finish the plan, and then to say, with Christ, (who of us will be able?)—“It is finished!”

REVERSES NEEDED

“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small”
(Proverbs 24:10).

ADVERSITY KILLS only where there is weakness to be killed. Real vigor is at once tested and fed by it, seen to be great as the adversity mastered is great, and also to be made great by the mastering. This too is the common feeling of mankind, for thus only comes it to be a proverb or current maxim. And the proverb holds good of all sorts of strength, that of the muscles and that of the nerves, that which lies in resolution and that which comes by faith in God, that which is moral and that which is religious, that which is personal and that which is national, that which belongs to civil administration and that which pertains to the deeds of arms. Small is the strength, anywhere and everywhere, that cannot stand adversity, and small will it stay and smaller will it grow to the end.

Last Sunday morning when you were assembled here in the sacred quiet worship, the patriot soldiers of your army—that to which you had contributed your sons, your fellow citizens and your money,

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that whose preparations and advances you had watched with exulting confidence and with expectation eager as the love you bore to your dear country itself—were being joined in battle with its enemies; thus to have their terrible worship in the day-long sacrifice of blood, before the belching cannon of the foe and among their charging hosts of cavalry, on a field that was itself their enemy.

If it was unnecessary, it is much to be regretted that the battle should have been given upon that day; but if it was necessary, then I know not any cause more worthy of the day or any offering that could be deeper in sacrifice, or in fact more dutiful to God. The tidings of the evening came, and it was so far victory. Many were exultant, but some of us lay down that night oppressed with dreadful forebodings. In the news of the morning it was defeat and flight and carnage and loss. Our fine army was gone, our hopes were dashed, our hearts sunk down struggling as it were in agony, and our fancy broke loose in the imagination of innumerable perils. We imagined the enemy rushing back on Harper's Ferry and across into Maryland, or down upon the Potomac to cut off the passage of the river, then upon the great fortress of the Chesapeake, to drive in that portion of the army and beleaguer the fortress. We imagined also a political reaction, a difficulty of obtaining recruits, a loss of credit and means for the war in the money market, the probable interference with our blockade by France and England, and finally a general outbreak of factiousness and disorder amounting to a disorganization of the Government. At any rate the struggle must be indefinitely protracted, and the public burdens and distresses indefinitely increased.

These first apprehensions are already quieted in part. The loss turns out to be less than was feared, the retreat to be less completely a flight. The enemy are quite as much crippled as we. And what is more, a great deal, to our feeling and our future energy, we have the grand satisfaction of knowing that our soldiers fought the day out in prodigies of valor. Let us thank God for this and count some fraction at least of victory. Let us also thank God for what is already made clear that our spirit as a people is not quelled, but that we find ourselves beginning at once to meet our adversity with a steady and stout resolve, pushing forward new regiments and preparing to double the army already raised. The flash of feeling is over, and bubble of egregious expectation is burst, but the fire of duty burns only the more intensely, and the determination of sacrifice is as much more firmly set as it is more rationally made. The Government also is more instructed than it could be without this disaster, and is bracing itself to its work with tenfold energy. The army also has a new leader, in whose conduct we may rest with more implicit confidence. So that in the future our chances of defeat are really many times fewer than they were or even could have been before, when it seemed to be so very

certain that we could not fail. Our adversity, since we began to bear it, is already increasing our strength.

What is now to be done it is not for me to show; that belongs to the Government. I will only say that some things are to be done by us that belong to our duty as good citizens. As good citizens we are not, for example, to busy ourselves overmuch in finding who is to blame, and scolding one party or another in the administration of the Government or the army. Nothing will more fatally break down our confidence or chill our enthusiasm. One thing at least is clear, that the Government must govern. And if some mistakes have been made, in what great cause have they not? There may be some incompetent persons in the Government and the officering of the army; but infallible competency—where has it been found? Besides the mistakes have been discovered and the incompetent men are in a way to be weeded out of their places. We want no more a driving force outside of the Government to press it forward when it is not ready; no more a guiding force to thrust external judgments in upon its plans. To speak more plainly still, we want no newspaper government, and least of all a newspaper army. A pasteboard government or pasteboard army were just as much better, as it is less noisy and less capable of mischief. Let the Government govern, and the army fight, and let both have their own counsel, disturbed and thrown out of balance by no gusty conceit or irresponsible and fanatical clamor.

But the main point for us now is to get ourselves ready for the grand struggle we are in by duly conceiving the meaning of it, and receiving those settled convictions that will stay by us in all the changing moods we are to pass and the discouragements we are to encounter. This immense enthusiasm, bursting forth spontaneous in a day, and fusing us into a complete unity—how great and thrilling a surprise has it been to us! I know of nothing in the whole compass of human history at all comparable to it in sublimity. It verily seems to be, in some sense, an inspiration of God; and it is even difficult to shut away the suggestion that innumerable sacrifices and prayers laid up for us by the patriot fathers of the past ages were being mixed in now with our feeling, and by God's will heaving now in our bosom.

See, we have been saying, what an immense loyalty there is in our people! How the simple sight of our flag kindles a fire in us that was never kindled by any grandest impersonation of heroism and historic royalty! It is even so, and we thank God for the revelation; but this loyalty is no fixed fact, it becomes us to know, as long as it only fires our passion. It must get hold of our solid convictions and burn itself through into our moral nature itself in order to become reliable and sure. It must be struck by sacrifice, drilled into the very bone of our substance by persistent struggles with adversity, and then it will stand, then it is loyalty complete. To sail out gayly in a breeze singing

patriotic songs is a good enough beginning of the voyage, but a hurricane or two or merely a bad leak discovered will take all that away, and then a good steerage at the helm and a true compass and a sturdy, stout resolve, kept up through long watchings and exhaustive labors—these only will at last bring in the ship. What I wish then more especially on the present occasion is to speak, not to impulse but to conviction; not to cry “forward,” “forward to Richmond,” or forward to some other where beyond, but to go over a calm revision of the matter of the war itself, showing what it means and the great moral and religious ideas that are struggling to the birth in it—possibly to be duly born only in great throes of adversity and sacrifice.

It is a remarkable but very serious fact, not sufficiently noted as far as my observation extends, that our Revolutionary fathers left us the legacy of this war in the ambiguities of thought and principle which they suffered in respect to the foundations of government itself. The real fact is that, without proposing it or being distinctly conscious of it, they organized a government such as we at least have understood to be without moral or religious ideas; in one view a merely man-made compact, that without something further, which in fact was omitted or even philosophically excluded, could never have more than a semblance of authority. More it has actually had, because our nature itself has been wiser and deeper and closer to God than our political doctrines; but we have been gradually wearing our nature down to the level of our doctrines; breeding out, so to speak, the sentiments in it that took hold of authority, till at last we have brought ourselves down as closely as may be to the dissolution of all nationality and all ties of order. Hence the war. It has come just as soon as we made it necessary, and not a day sooner. And it will stay on to the end of our history itself unless the mistake we have suffered is, at least practically, rectified. We have never been a properly loyal people; we are not so now save in the feeling or flame of the hour. Our habit has been too much a habit of disrespect, not to persons only, but to law. Government, we say or have been saying, is only what we make ourselves, therefore we are at least upon a level with it; we too made the nationality, and can we not as well unmake it?

That we may duly understand this matter, go back a moment to the Revolution, and trace the two very distinct, yet in a certain superficial sense, agreeing elements that entered into it. First there was what, for distinction's sake, we may call the historic element, represented more especially by the New England people. The political ideas were shaped by religion—so far church ideas. The church for example was a brotherhood; out of that grew historically the notions of political equality in the state. Government also was conceived to be for the governed, just as the church was for the members; and both were God's

institutes—ordinances of God. The major vote in both was but a way of designating rulers, not the source of their sovereignty or spring of their authority. Designated by us, their investiture was from God, the only spring of authority. Their text for elective government was the same that our Hartford Hooker used, when preaching in 1638 for the Convention which framed our State Constitution—the first constitution of the new world, and type of all the others that came after, even that of the nation itself: “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and *I will make them rulers over you.*” God was to be the head of authority, and the rulers were to have their authority from him. Such was the historic training that preceded and prepared this wing of the Revolution.

The other wing was prepared by sentiments wholly different; such, for example, as are sufficiently well represented in the life and immense public influence of Mr. Jefferson; a man who taught abstractively, not religiously, and led the unreligious mind of the time by his abstractions. It was not his way to deal in moral ideas of any kind. Familiar with the writings of Rousseau and the generally infidel literature of the French nation, his mind was, to say the least, so far dominated by them as to work entirely in their moulds. He had no conception of any difficulty in making a complete government for the political state by mere human composition, following Rousseau’s theory, which discovers the foundation of all government in a “social compact.” Going never higher than man, or back of man, he supposed that man could somehow create authority over man; that a machine could be got up by the consent of the governed that would really oblige or bind their consent; not staying even to observe that the moment anything binds or takes hold of the moral nature, it rules by force of a moral idea, and touches by the supposition some throne of order and law above the range of mere humanity. Covered in by this immense oversight, he falls back on the philosophic, abstractive contemplation of men, and finding them all so many original monads with nothing historic in them as yet, he says: Are they not all equal? Taking the men thus to be inherently equal in their natural prerogatives and rights, he asks their consent, makes the compact, and that is to be the grand political liberty of the world.

But the two great wings thus described can agree, you will see, in many things, only saying them always in a different sense; one in a historic, the other in an abstractive, theoretic sense; one in a religious, and the other in an atheistic; both looking after consent and the major vote, both going for equality, both wanting Articles of Agreement, and finally both a Constitution. And the result is that in the consent, in the major vote, in the equality, in the Articles of Agreement, in the Constitution, Christianity in its solid and historic verity as embodied in the life of a people joins hands, so to speak, with what have been called, though in a different view, the “glittering generalities” of

Mr. Jefferson. Thus in drawing the Declaration of Independence he puts in by courtesy the recognition of a Creator and creation, following on with his "self-evident truths," such as that "all men are created equal," and that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"; in which too the other wing of the revolution can well enough agree, only they will take them, not as abstractions, but in a sense that is qualified and shaped by their history. They had nothing to do with some theoretic equality in man *before* government, in which as a first truth of nature governments are grounded. They were born into government, and they even believed in a certain sacred equality under it as their personal right. They had also elected their rulers, and so far they could agree to the right of a government by consent, but they never had assumed that men are *ipso facto* exempt from obligation who have not consented, or that an autocratic and princely government is of necessity void and without "just power." Their "equality," their "consent," were the divine right of their history from the landing of the fathers downward and before the French Encyclopaedists were born.

You will thus perceive that two distinct or widely different constitutional elements entered into our political order at the beginning; that agreeing in forms of words they were yet about as really not in agreement, and have in fact been struggling in the womb of it like Jacob and Esau from the first day until now.

We have not always been conscious of the fact, yet so it has been. On one side we have had the sense of a historic and morally binding authority, freedom sanctified by law and law by God himself, living as it were in a common, all-dominating nationality fortified and crowned by moral ideas. On the other, we have not so much been obeying as speculating, drawing out our theories from points back of all history—theories of compact, consentings, reserved rights, sovereignties of the people and the like—till finally we have speculated almost everything away, and find that actually nothing is left us but to fight out the question whether we shall have a nationality or not; whether we shall go to pieces in the godless platitudes or stand fast and live under laws and institutions sanctified by a providential history. Proximately our whole difficulty is an issue forced by slavery; but if we go back to the deepest root of the trouble, we shall find that it comes of trying to maintain a government without moral ideas and to concentrate a loyal feeling around institutions that, as many reason, are only human compacts, entitled of course, if that be all, to no feeling of authority or even of respect.

I have spoken thus of Mr. Jefferson and of his opinions, not as invoking the old party prejudice against him long ago buried; I join no issue with his reputed infidelity; I only charge that he brought in modes of thought and philosophy as regards political matters which are none the less bitterly pernicious in that they were patriotically

meant; and that his name gained a currency for them that has made them even identical, as thousands really conceive, with our institutions themselves.

Glance along down the track of our history now, and see how these ideas have been letting us regularly down toward the present disruption of order; how the moral ideas that constitute the only real basis of government—of ours as of all others—are ignored, omitted, or quite frittered away by their action.

Our statesmen or politicians, not being generally religious men, take up with difficulty conceptions of government or the foundations of government that suppose the higher rule of God. They are not atheists, but such modes of thought are not in their plane. When they hear it affirmed that "the powers that be are ordained of God," they think it may be very good in the New Testament and the ministers and pious people to compliment their religion by such a tribute, but that their scripture notion is forced and farfetched. It signifies nothing, in the way of qualifying such an impression, that every human soul is configured to civil as to parental authority, bowing to any government actually existing, autocratic or elective, with a felt obligation when it rules well. As little does it signify that God, as certainly as there is a God, dominates in all history, building all societies into forms of order and law and that when constitutions are framed by men they were as really framed by God, the grand universal Protector of society, and are nothing in fact but the issuing into form of a government that he before implanted in the social orders and historic ideas of the people; possible therefore to be framed and to hold the binding force of laws, because God himself has prepared them and stamped them with his own providential sovereignty. Sometimes too the politicians are a little annoyed, as we may see, by this foisting in of the claims of religion. What has religion to do with political matters? What has the church to do with the state? As if the state were really outside of God's prerogative and he had nothing to do with it!—nothing to do with the marshalling and well ordering and protecting rule of society!

So they fall off easily into the "glittering generalities," and begin to theorize about compacts, consentings and the like, building up our governmental order from below. First of all they clear the ground by a sweeping denial, rejoicing in the discovery that all claims of divine right in government are preposterous. If they only meant by this that all claims to govern wrong by divine right are a baseless and dreadful hypocrisy, it would be well; but they really conceive that government is now to rule without any divine right at all; as if there were any such thing as a right that is not divine right and has not God's eternal sanctions going with it; any such thing as authority

in law that is not centred in God and pronounced in the moral nature by him.

They do not perceive that God is joined to all right and all defences of right in society by the eternal necessity of his nature—stands by them, makes them his own, clothes them with his own everlasting authority; hence that all law gets the binding force of law.

But the ground is clear—religion is one thing, government is another—and now there is nothing to do but to find how man can make or does make a government without God or any divine sanction. Well, man is the fact given, government the problem. And the man being a complete individual, independent and sole arbiter of his own actions and exactly equal, so far at least, to every other, he may choose if he please never to have any government at all. But he consents, and there government begins. He surrenders a part of his own rights, and what he surrenders goes to make the government. The government is, of course, a compact. The major vote chooses the rulers, and the people are the sovereign head whence all law and authority emanate. To them only the rulers are responsible, being in fact their agents, administering a trust for them. And this, it is conceived, is a true account of civil government, our own constitutional government.

These now are the saws of our current political philosophy, figuring always in the speeches and political speculations of our statesmen from the Revolution downward. They could many of them be true enough were they qualified so as to let in God and religion, or so as to meet and duly recognize the moral ideas of history; but taken as they are meant, they are about the shallowest, chaffiest fictions ever accepted by a people as the just account of their laws.

Let there be no misunderstanding here; I am not complaining of the laws or the constitutions; better and more beneficent never existed. I am only complaining of the account that is made of them, the philosophy that is given of their grounds and underlying principles. They represent in fact our history, moral and religious; never in any sense the false reasons by which we strip them of their sanctity.

There was never, in the first place, any such prior man or body of men to make a government. We are born into government as we are into the atmosphere, and when we assume to make a government or constitution, we only draw out one that was providentially in us before. We could not have a king or a nobility, for example, in this country; for there was no material given out of which to make either one or the other. The church life and order was democratic too. The whole English constitution also was in us before. In these facts, prepared in history by God, our institutions lie. We did not make them. We only sketched them, and God put them in us to be sketched. And when that is done they are his, clothed with his divine sanction as the Founder and Protector of states.

Again, neither we nor any other people ever made a civil compact, except as it was virtually made by God before; never surrendered a part of our natural self-government to endow the government of the State. We never had, in fact, any one right of a government to surrender. What human being ever had or by any conceivable method could have, as being simply a man, the right to legislate or to punish or to make war or to levy taxes or to enforce contracts and the payment of debts or to summon witnesses? On the contrary we go into the civil state for nothing but to get our rights and have them secured—all the rights we have.

So of what is called the inherent, natural right of self-government in a state and the right of a government by the major vote. Is it so, that no great people of the world ever had a lawful or legitimate right to rule but our own? And how constantly when we say it does the sense of some preposterous assumption creep over the mind of every ordinarily sensible man, raising the suspicion that after all the institutions of his country are hollow and baseless—even as the theory given to account for them is plainly seen to be.

So again of the popular sovereignty, the natural sovereignty of the people. If we understand ourselves, the people are no more sovereign and have no better right to be than any single ruler has when ruling in the succession of birth, if he only takes his power in the true historic way of his country and rules well. The real truth is, after all, that our popular vote or choice is only one way of designating rulers, and the succession of blood another; both equally good and right when the historic order makes them so. And then the laws, legitimated by history and clothed in that manner with a divine right, rule over all—over the elections, over the successions; then over the rulers as truly as the subjects.

Meantime what results, but that we get a government under these fictions of theory which, by the supposition, is no government? It is only a copartnership, and has no national authority, no obligation. How can a copartnership amount to a governing power over the parties in it? If they agree to legislate, it does not make them a legislature. What are their rulers but committees or agents, and what can they do that amounts to government more than the committees, agents, directors of a bank? Their "be it enacted" has no force of law; it is only their agreement or consent, which binds nobody, touches no conscience. They get no authority till we see them authorized to legislate by God. Nothing touches the conscience and becomes morally binding that is not from above the mere human level. Laws become laws only when there is felt to be some divine right in them, some voice of God speaking in them.

Now in all these schemings of theory, by which we have been contriving how to generate or claiming that we have generated a govern-

ment without going above humanity, we lose out all moral ideas and take away all tonic forces necessary to government. Our merely terrene, almost subterranean, always godless fabric, becomes more and more exactly what we have taken it to be in our philosophy. The habit of respect dies out in us; we respect nothing; authority is more and more completely ignored. What authority have laws, when there is no sovereignty back of them or in them but that of the people? The grand, historic, religious element is worn away or supplanted thus by what we take to be our wiser philosophy, and the spirit of loyalty runs down to be a mere feeling of attachment, so weak that we are scarcely conscious of it, to our mere compacts and man-made sovereignties.

Meantime our descent is accelerated in the same direction by the demoralizing forces of peace and unexampled prosperity, and more than all by the scrambles of party and the venal intrigues of political leaders and rulers, till finally we reach a state where the government is chiefly valued for what can be gotten out of it by the farming of its revenues and offices and contracts. Reverence to its honor, care for its safety, integrity in maintaining it, willingness to make sacrifices for it, all give way, and an awful recklessness respecting it or what becomes of it is visible on every side.

And again the same descent is accelerated by the essentially immoral, or unmoral, habit of slavery, breeding as it does an imperious, violent, unsubordinated character in the minds that are trained in it. They do not live in law and make nothing of obligation or duty; but they grow up into their will, into self-assertion, into force and bloody passion and all the murderous barbarities misnamed chivalry. To be a man is to be above obedience; and to speak of duty, conscience, obedience to God, is the same thing whether in young or old as to be a poltroon or a sneak. And this wild, self-willed habit grows worse and worse by continuance; being gradually bred into the stock, as all habits are, and becoming a naturally propagated quality; till finally a people is produced, or will be, that are really incapable of law or sound government—unfit to be rulers, incapable of being ruled.

But the grand crowning mischief is yet to be named. Out of these baseless, unhistoric, merely speculated theories of government, and the gradual demoralization of our habit under them, a doctrine of State rights is finally to emerge and organize the armed treason that explodes our nationality. Our political theories never gave us a real nationality but only a copartnership, and the armed treason is only the consummated result of our speculations. Where nothing exists but a consent, what can be needed to end it but a dissent? And if the States are formed by the consent of individuals, was not the general government formed by the consent of the States? What then have we to do but to give up the partnership of the States when we will? If a tariff act is passed displeasing to some States they may right-

fully nullify it; if a President is elected not in the interest of slavery they may secede; that is, withdraw their consent and stand upon their reserved rights. "By nature," says Mr. Calhoun — so runs the argument — "every individual has the right to govern himself, and governments must derive their right from the assent, express or implied, of the governed, and subject to such limitations as they may impose." . . . "Indeed, according to our theory, governments are in their nature but trusts, and those appointed to administer them trustees or agents, to execute trust powers. The sovereignty resides elsewhere, in the people, not in the government, and with us the people mean the people of the several States." Then of course it follows in the exact strain, as anyone may see, of our philosophy or cant, misnamed philosophy, that the States have a right to nullify or secede at will. And so our brave abstractions that we began with come to their issue finally in a most brave conclusion that is every way worthy of them. No matter that the Constitution asserts in a hundred ways the essential and perpetual supremacy of the Government. No matter that it was given to the States to be ratified, in that way to cut off eternally all pretences of sovereignty in themselves; no matter that more than a full half of the States now existing were actually created and organized by the general Government on its own territory. Neither is it anything that we are landed in the very strange predicament of being a people, the only one ever heard of in the world, without a nationality. Is the nationality in the States? No, that was never so much as thought of. Is it in the general Government? No, that is philosophically denied. And so we are left to the luckless condition of being no nation at all having no nationality anywhere! We began with a godless theorizing, and we end, just as we should, in discovering that we have not so much as made any nation at all. We scorned this State rights theory at first, but we have been bidding many years for the casting vote of the South and selling out the nation to pay, and the doctrine, meantime, has been creeping worm-like and silently into the North, till many have begun to give into it scarcely knowing when it arrived. Finally the secession, argued for as a right, begins to be planned for as a fact. Even Cabinet ministers in the Government were preparing it more than a year ago, as is well ascertained, contriving how to break down the credit of the Government, how to empty the armories by a transfer of arms, how to weaken the defences, how to corrupt the allegiance of the army. And now at last the fact itself is come, the secession is made — hence the war.

If now you have followed me in this exposition, you have seen how our want of moral ideas and our commonly accepted philosophy of government, coupled with other demoralizing and disintegrating influences in our scheme of society, both North and South, have been drawing us down to this from the first. We have come to the final break and disaster, just as soon as we must, not a day sooner.

Gravity was never surer in the precipitation of a stone or more regular in the downward pull and pressure.

And what is it now that is arming to assert and establish the broken nationality? Not religion certainly—it does not appear that our people are consciously more given to religion than they have been—yet, in another view, it is no other than the old historic-religious element in which our nationality has been grounded from the first; that which has been smothered and kept under by the specious fictions we have contrived to account for the government without reference to God or to moral ideas. Yes, it is this old, implicitly, if not formally, religious element that is struggling out again now, clad all over in arms, to maintain the falling nationality. It looked on the Sumter flag, the Stars and Stripes shot through and shot down by traitors, and as it looked took fire. What a wonder is it even to ourselves to see the blaze that is kindled! We call it loyalty—we did not imagine that we had it! What a grand, rich sentiment it is! See what strength it has! See how it raises common men into heroes! See the bloody baptism wherewith it is able to be baptized, and how it pours the regiments on, down the rivers and over the mountains and round the promontories, to hurl their bodies against the armed treason! The mere feeling, the passion, if we so choose to call it—is not the bliss of it worth even the cost of the war? What in fact is more priceless to a nation than great sentiments? So we bless ourselves in the loyalty of the hour, and the more that there certainly is some latent heat of religion in the blaze of it.

But more is wanted, and God is pressing us on to the apprehending of that for which we are apprehended. Our passion must be stiffened and made a fixed sentiment, as it can be only when it is penetrated and fastened by moral ideas. And this requires adversity. As the dyers use mordants to set in their colors, so adversity is the mordant for all sentiments of morality. The true loyalty is never reached till the laws and the nation are made to appear sacred, or somewhat more than human. And that will not be done till we have made long, weary, terrible sacrifices for it. Without shedding of blood there is no such grace prepared. There must be reverses and losses and times of deep concern. There must be tears in the houses as well as blood in the fields; the fathers and mothers, the wives and dear children, coming into the woe to fight in hard bewailings. Desolated fields, prostrations of trade, discouragements of all kinds, must be accepted with unfaltering, unsubduable patience. Religion must send up her cry out of houses, temples, closets, where faith groans heavily before God. In these and all such terrible throes the true loyalty is born. Then the nation emerges at last a true nation, consecrated and made great in our eyes by the sacrifices it has cost! There is no way but just this to make a nation great and holy in the feeling of its people.

And it is never raised in this manner till it has fought up some great

man or hero in whom its struggles and victories are fitly personated. One really great man or commander we certainly have, mercifully preserved to us to be the centralizing head of our confidence, and to fulfil his sublime charge of fatherhood in the conduct of our great affairs. But he belongs in a sense to the past and will soon be gone. We want another that belongs more properly to the future, the new and great future. And such an one cannot be made to order or by any brief holiday campaigning. He must be long enough and deep enough in the struggle to be crowned as the soldier of Providence. Most deeply do we want such a man, a new Washington, but still a man of his age and time. True, these Washingtons are expensive; they cost how many sacrifices, how many thousands of lives, what rivers of tears and blood and money! And yet they are cheap! Our old Washington — what would we take for him now? Give us grace, O thou God of the land, only to deserve and patiently wait and sturdily fight for another; so for the establishment of our glorious nationality and the everlasting expulsion of those baseless, godless theories which our fathers let in to corrupt and filch away the principles of right and law-begirt liberty, for which in fact they bled!

But this is war, we shall be told, and war is certainly no such moral affair. How then do we expect any such moral regeneration to come out of it? In one view the objection is good; war is a great demoralizer, throwing back on society men who have been hardened and made desperate, often, by the vices and reckless violences of camp life. But the same is true of peace; that also has its dangers and corruptions; breeding, finally, all most selfish, unheroic and meanest vices, untuning all noblest energies, making little men and loose and low, ignorant of sacrifice and scarcely meaning it even when they cleave to their virtues. Peace will do for angels, but war is God's ordinance for sinners, and they want the schooling of it often. In time of war what a sense of discipline is forced! Here at least there must be and will be obedience; and the people outside get the sense of it about as truly as the army itself. Here authority towers high, and the stern necessities of the field clothe it with honor. Government is here sharpened to a cutting edge. All the laxities of feeling and duty are drawn tight. Principles and moral convictions are toned to a practical supremacy. Hence the remarkable fact that the old Romans were the sternest of all ancient people in their morality. The military drill of their perpetual warfare brought them into the sense of order and law and the fixed necessity of obedience to rule. And so they became the great law-nation of the world, producing codes and rescripts that have been the stock matter of all the civil codes and tribunals even of the modern nations.

Neither is it any objection that ours is a civil war, however much we may seem to be horrified by the thought of it. Where a civil war is not a war of factions but of principles and practical ends, it is the very

best and most fruitful of all wars. The great civil war of Cromwell and Charles for example, what was it in fact but a fighting out of all that is most valuable in the British Constitution? And what was the result of it, briefly stated, but liberty enthroned and fortified by religion? And there was never a people more fortunate in the occasions of a civil war than we. Not one doubt is permitted us that we are fighting for the right and our adversaries for the wrong; we to save the best government of the world and they to destroy it. Whence it follows that, as God is with all right and for it by the fixed necessity of his virtue, we may know that we are fighting up to God and not away from him. And the victory when it comes will even be a kind of religious crowning of our nationality. All the atheistic jargon we have left behind us will be gone, and the throne of order established will be sanctified by moral convictions. What we have fought out by so many and bloody sacrifices will be hallowed by them in our feeling. Our loyalty will be entered into our conscience and the springs of our religious nature. Government will now govern and will be valued because it does, and the feeble platitudes we let in for a philosophy will be displaced by the old historic habits and convictions that have been the real life of our institutions from the first.

All this, you will observe, by the simple schooling of our adversities and without any reform or attempted amendment of our institutions! Just fighting the war out into victory and established nationality will be enough. It might not be amiss at some fit time to insert in the preamble of our Constitution a recognition of the fact that the authority of government in every form is derivable and can be philosophically derived only from God. Not that any mere formal recognition of God or the want of it is a matter of essential consequence, but only that the exclusion or recorded denial of theories under which we have been so fatally demoralized could, with excellent effect, be incorporated in the body of the Constitution itself. But this is no time to agitate or put on foot political reforms of any kind; and I wish it to be distinctly observed that I am only showing what our adversity means, and helping you to bear it with a resolute heart for the good that is in it.

Having such a cause, my friends, with such great hopes before us, this one almost glorious reverse that we have met will signify little. Adversity will be our strength, disappointments our arguments. I know not what dark days and times of unspeakable trial are before us, but we must be ready for anything, daunted and discouraged by nothing. Have we property, let it go—what is property in such a cause? Have we husbands, have we sons, put the armor on them and the holy panoply of our prayers and send them to the field. Anything, that we may have a nationality and a government and have the true loyalty burnt into the hearts of our children!

Teach us, O God, to be worthy of these great hopes; make us equal

to the glorious calling of the Providence; be thou God of hosts in our armies; and help us to establish, on eternal and right foundations, The Great Republic of the future ages.

CHRIST REGENERATES EVEN THE DESIRES

“And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire” (Mark 10:35).

HAD CHRIST ever been willing to indulge in satire, I think he would have done it here. These young gentlemen make a request so large, and withal so very absurd, that we at least can scarcely restrain a smile at their expense. “Whatsoever we desire,” – what power in the creation could give it? And then it would be strange, above all, if they themselves could endure the gift.

Still the Saviour hears them kindly and considerately, only showing them, when they come to state the particular thing they want, that even that thing – the sitting on his right and left – means perhaps a good deal more than they imagine, viz.: that they drink of his bitter cup and be baptized with his fiery baptism. And when he finds them eager enough to answer still that they can do even that, he only turns them off in the gentlest manner, as children that he sees are looking after a toy which it would cost them a tragedy of suffering to accept. I think we can see, too, in his manner, that he regards them with a pity so considerate, simply because the absurdity they are in is nothing but the common absurdity of the whole living world. For what are we all saying, young and old, the young more eagerly, the old more indifferently, but exactly what amounts to the same thing, under one form of language or another – “Let us have this, that, the other, any thing and every thing we desire.” Sometimes, if we could see it, we are really saying it in our prayers; though if we should pause long enough upon the matter to let our apprehension run a little way, I

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think we should almost any one of us begin to suspect that, having his particular desire, he might sometimes have more than he could bear, and might perfectly know that, if all of us could have it, we should make the world a bedlam of confusion without even a chance of order and harmony left. The first and most forward point accordingly which meets us in the consideration of this subject, is that—

Our human desire, in the common plane of nature and the world, is blind, or unintelligent—out of all keeping with our real wants and possibilities.

I mean, by this, that we are commonly desiring just what would be the greatest damage to us, or the misery worst to be suffered, and do not know it; that our tamest desires are often most untamed as regards the order of reason; and that we are all desiring unwittingly, what is exactly contrary to God's counsel, what is possible never to be, and if it might, would set us in general repugnance with each other, and society itself.

We are apt to imagine that, since we are consciously beings of intelligence, our desires must of course be included, and be themselves intelligent as we are. But we are not intelligent beings it happens in the sense here supposed. We are only a little intelligent, in a very few things, and we do not mean by claiming this title, if we understand ourselves, much more than that we are of another grade in comparison with the animals—able that is to be intelligent if we get the opportunity, as they are not. We get room thus, large enough for the fact of a general state of unreason in our desires. After all they may be about as far from intelligence as they can be—possibly not more intelligent than our passions, appetites, and bodily secretions are. In one view still, they are motive forces of endowment for intelligent action, instigators of energy, purpose and character, and if we knew them only as they move in their law, bound up in the original sweet harmony of an upright state, we should doubtless see them working instinctively on as co-factors with intelligence, if not intelligent themselves.

But, in their present wild way, we see them plainly loosed from their law by transgression—heavings all and foamings of the inward tumult—aspiration, soul-hunger, hate, ambition, pride, passion, lust of gain, lust of power; and what do they signify more visibly, than that all right harmony and proportion are gone, as far as they are concerned. Nothing has its natural value before them, because they are reeking themselves in all kinds of disorder bodily and mental. They are phantoms without perception. Even smoke is scarcely less intelligent.

That we may better conceive this general truth, revert, first of all, to the grounds out of which they get their spring. They do not come

after reason commonly, asking permission of reason, but they begin their instigations from a fund of raw lustings in the nature clean back of intelligence; rushing out as troops in a certain wildness and confused, blind huddle, that allows us to think of them with no great respect. Understanding well their disorder and confusion, we have it as a common way of speaking that reason must govern them — which supposes, clearly, that reason is not in them. And what do we better know, than that only a very partial government of them is possible; that they swarm so fast and fly so far and wildly, that no queen bee of reason can possibly control the hive.

The next thing to be noted is that they have no respect to possibilities and causes, and terms of moral award. Thus one man desires dry weather, and another rain, one office, and another the same office, one to own a house, another the same house, some to be honorable without character, some to be useful without industry, some to be learned without study. We desire also to own what we mortgage, keep what we sell, and get what nobody can have. We cypher out gains against the terms of arithmetic, and even pray God squarely against each other. We run riot in this manner all the while, even against possibilities themselves. A child crying after the moon is in the same scale of intelligence.

Causes again we as little respect. Having it as a clear test of insanity to be reaching after what every body knows eternal causes forbid, we are yet all the while doing it. We want our clocks to move a great deal faster in the playtimes appointed for childhood, and a great deal slower in the payment times appointed in the engagements of manhood. We want poor soils to bear great crops, indolence to be thrifty, intemperance to be healthy, and to have all good supplies come in, doing nothing to earn or provide them.

Against all terms and conditions of morality, also, we want to be confided in, having neither truth nor honesty. We desire to be honored, not having worth enough even to be respected. We want the comforts of religion without religion, asking for rewards to come without duties, and that evils fly away which are fastened by our bad deserts. Of course our judgment goes not with the nonsense there may be in such desires, but they none the less make haste, scorning all detentions of judgment.

We get also another kind of proof in this matter, by discovering afterwards how absurd our desires have been — that the marriage we sought would have kept us from a good one, and would have been itself a bitter woe; that the bad weather of yesterday, so much against our patience, kept us from the car that was wrecked, or the steamer that was sunk by an explosion; that the treachery of a friend, so much deplored, saved us from the whirlpool of temptation into which we were plunging; that the failure of an adventure we were prosecuting

with high expectation, was the only thing that could have sobered our feeling, and prepared us to a penitent life. Sitting down thus, after many years, and looking back on the desires that have instigated our feeling, we discover what a smoke of delusion was in them, and how nearly absurd they were. How often has their crossing been our benefit, and how many thousand times over have we seen it proved by experiment, that they were blind instigations, thrusting us onward, had they not been mercifully defeated, on results of unspeakable disaster.

There is yet another fact concerning them which has only been adverted to, and requires to be more formally stated, viz.: that they are not only blind or wild, as I have been saying, but are also a great part of them morally bad, or wicked; reeking with selfishness, fouled by lust, bittered and soured by envies, jealousies, resentments, revenges, wounded pride, mortified littleness. Thus it was that even Goethe, no very staunch confessor of orthodoxy, was constrained to say – “There is something in every man’s heart, which if we could know, would make us hate him.” And why not also make him hate himself? Hateful is the only fit epithet for this murky-looking crew, that are always breaking into the mind, and hovering in among its best thoughts. Who that is not insane can think it possible to set them in right order, and tame them by his mere will?

What then, is there no possibility but to be driven wild, and haggard always by these phantoms? I think there is, and I shall now undertake, for a second stage in my subject, to show –

That Christ new-molds the desires in their spring, and configures them inwardly to God; regenerating the soul at this deepest and most hidden point of character.

We commonly speak of a new creating grace for souls, in the matter of principle, will, the affections, and we magnify our gospel in the fact that it can undertake a work so nearly central. I think it can do more, that it can even go through into what is background, down into substructure, where the impulsions of desire begin to move unasked, and, by their own self-instigation, stir on all the disorders of the will and the heart; that it can go through, I say, and down among them, reducing them to law, and setting them in harmony with God as they rise.

I do not mean by this that we are put on this work of reduction ourselves, under the divine helps given us. Thus it may be conceived that we are only now to undertake, ourselves, more hopefully the government of our desires. But this matter of government begins too late, for it supposes that the desires to be governed, at any given time, are already broken loose in their rampages, so that if, by due campaigning, we should get them under, there will always be new ones, not less wild, coming after. Besides, we do not see far enough

to govern them understandingly, or in any but a certain coarse way. Such as are most plainly wild, vaulting as it were above the moon, we can well enough distinguish and repress. We can know something, and can see a little way, but if we could see just one inch farther, how often should we stand back from a desire that seems to be quite wise, even as from a precipice. You would see for example that the horse you are desiring and bargaining for to-day, will kick you into eternity to-morrow. And so a single stage farther of perception would almost every hour, set you back in recoil from some other and still other desired object. We can do something, of course, by self-government in this matter, ought to do what we can, or what God will help us do wisely, but we want most visibly some other more competent and less partial kind of remedy.

Sometimes a different kind of work is undertaken, that is supposed to be more adequate. A certain class of devotees, meaning to be eminently Christian, set themselves to the task of extirpating their desires; counting it the very essence of perfection to have no desires. It is not as if they were merely in a ferment of misrule, but as if they were properties of nature inherently bad. Hence the attempt is, by abnegations, penances, macerations, poverties, mortifications, vows of solitude, and complete withdrawment from the world to kill them off, expecting that when they are dead sin itself will be dead, and all the goings on of the soul will be in purity, whereupon the vision of God will follow. Alas! it is not seen that when these impulsive forces of the soul are extirpated, the corrosive will be left in as much greater activity. And the result is that the imagination goaded by remorse, breaks into riot, and the poor anchorite, how often has it been the fact, begins to see devils, and falls into a kind of saintly *delirium tremens* which is real insanity.

Our gospel, as I now proceed to show, has a better way. It is never jealous of the desires, puts us to no task of repression, or extirpation. It proposes to keep them still on hand, as integral and even necessary parts of our great moral nature. In them it beholds the grand impulses of activity, the robustness of health, the spiritual momentum of all noblest energies, including even the energies of prayer itself. It even undertakes to intensify the desires, in the highest degree possible, only turning them away from what is selfish and low to what is worthy and good; giving promises for arguments, and saying, "ask what ye will," "open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

And it is most refreshing to see how these two young men, James and John, who came to Jesus in their most absurd request, had afterwards got on, and had learned to have not smaller desires, but larger and more free, because now trained to be in God's own order. They write books of Scripture under their names, and one of them says—"Whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"; "whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because

we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." He was in God's order, and now his desires went all to their mark. The other in his book is yet closer to the point, saying, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." And again he lectures more at large—"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence even of your lusts, that war in your members? Ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have and can not obtain, ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace." Yes, more grace, all the grace that is wanted to set the soul in God's harmony, and give it such desires as he can fitly grant. So these two greedy ones of the former day, we can see, had now made great progress. Living for so long a time in Christ, they had learned to have all their wild lustings put in accord with him, and so to have them liberally filled without upbraiding.

Let us now see how this grace which is called "more grace," draws the desires, in this manner, into their true cast of relationship with God.

It is done partly, we shall see, by prayer itself; that is by prayer, helped as it is and wrought in by the Spirit of God. For how grand a fact is it, and how full of hope, that the Spirit of God has presence in us so pervasively, being at the very spring point of all most hidden movement in us, even back of all that we can reach by our consciousness. And there by his subtle, most silent, really infinite power, he works, configuring the desires, before they are born into consciousness, to the reigning order and will of God. So that when we know not what we should pray for, he helpeth our infirmities and, so to speak, maketh intercession for us, heaving out our groanings of desire, otherwise impossible to be uttered, into prayers that are molded according to the will of God. And so all prayer is encouraged, by promises that make an institute of it, for the schooling and training of our desires, and drawing them into conformity with God and the everlasting reason of things.

In this way of prayer we obtain our request, because we have been drawn closely enough to be in true chime with his will, and so to make an authorized pull on his favor, by our right-deserving; even as the bow-line from a boat, pulling on some object to which it is fastened, draws not so much the shore to it, as it to the shore. In this way it comes to pass, that souls which are much in prayer, and get skill in it, obtain their desires in great part, by learning how to have good ones moderated in the will of God, being drawn so closely to him by their prayers, that bad ones fall away more and more completely, and leave them petitioning out of purity. In passing through which process

the Spirit helps them on, preparing them to prayer by the restored quality of their desires.

Again, there is a power in the new love Christ begets in the soul, to remold or recast the desires, in terms of harmony with each other and with God. When the supreme love is changed, being itself an imperial and naturally regnant principle, all the powers of misrule, including the desires, fall into chime with it. The love also is luminous and pure, so that no base underling, that would kennel back of knowledge in the mind, can hide from it. Besides, it does not have to govern or keep down, for it bathes and tinges all through, so to speak, even the desiring substance, with a color from itself. And then it follows that, as the love is, so the desires will be. Loving my enemy, I shall desire only his good. Loving God I shall desire all that belongs to his will, and the advance of his kingdom. And so, indirectly and by association, all the wild ferment of the corrupted nature, all the desires that belong to a sensual, earthly, selfish habit will be gradually changed, and the whole order, and scale, and scheme of desire will be replaced by another. In this love even the drunkard's appetite will be silent; for he will have only to abide in this love, to be free almost without a struggle. For it is a tide so full, that every basest longing is submerged by it.

"Breadth, length, depth, heighth, and to know the love of God that passeth knowledge," says an apostle, "that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." And when the soul is full in this manner, it wants nothing more, because it can hold nothing more, least of all any thing contrary. All the wild wishes and vagrant longings settle now into rest, when the fullness of God is come. Unruly desires will of course begin to have their liberty again when the love abates, but abiding long enough in God as we may, they will even die.

And just here it is that we duly conceive the Christian wise man. He is not any prophet or seer, neither is he any philosopher, but he is a man whose tempers and aspirations have found their equilibrium and right keeping in the love of God. He is called wise because his judgments are not overset by the tempests of wild desire, and because all the gusty instigations of his nature are laid, leaving it open to the sway of right reason and of God's pure counsel.

Our gospel also brings us yet another kind of power by which we have our desire remolded gradually, without superintending the process ourselves. The Christian soul is a soul that by its faith in Jesus Christ is entered into a most dear personal fraternity with him. It walks with him as in a companionship, has its conversation with him, admires him all the while the more, because it gets a deeper knowledge or insight of what is in him, and so, by a kind of social contagion, takes the mold of his feeling, and comes into configurations of temper that accord with his. For what do we better know, than that

every man, especially every young person, who is allowed to join himself to any great, much admired character, and pass even years in travel and work, and private counsel with him, takes his type insensibly, and grows into a mold that is largely correspondent. He imbibes, so to speak, the man, and that in matters too subtle even to be noted by himself. Not unlikely even his voice and accent will be affected, when he has no thought of it. How then shall it be with the disciple that walks in the dear great company of his Master? Suppose he has no thought of his desires, will he not be taking the type of his Master insensibly even in these? Is it too much to believe that all his inmost tempers and configurations will be recast, by a companionship so widely different from all mortal companionships, so unselfish and pure and true?

But suppose there still are left some traces of the old misrule and disorder, there is yet a will of Providence put running for him, to reduce all these and finish him, as it were, in God's order. Or it may be, if the sensual and low lustings of his former habit are already somewhat reduced, that there is too much eagerness left in his new Christian habit, and that he is sometimes rushing against God in it, even in his prayers. He loses patience, it may be, and is sorely galled that he can not make the good come to pass as he expected. Beaten back thus and discouraged, he protests that he is almost ready to give over desiring any thing; for what efficacy is there even in his good desires? Or he breaks out in a mourner's grief, perhaps, saying—"Why should God take away my talented and promising son, when I was going to make him such a blessing to the world? Or why my friend who was such a blessing already, and was so much wanted by us all?" By and by, after such sallies, it is discovered, perhaps, that the desires put forward so peremptorily were a good deal more romantic or ambitious, or subtly selfish than they should be, and could only be tamed by discipline. So God has us all the while in schooling under his providence, reducing our foolishness, and wearing out or worrying down our dictations. We roll up tumultuously, as the waves drive up their masses, break into foam and flatten out on the shore, but there is this very important difference, that our desires tire down at last, under God's strong discipline, while the waves never tire, and of course get no such benefit. So there is a grand tiring out principle in this rule of Providence, by which we are all the while being schooled into God's order. And in this manner the old Christian gets, at last, to have a wonderful wisdom in his experience without even knowing it, because it is hid in his more chastened tempers, and never thinks of being a rational knowledge at all.

Pressing on thus close upon his last limit, wrought in by Christ's word and Spirit and Providence, his secret mind, if not perfectly conformed to God, gets to be so very nearly conformed, that when he

drops into the river to cross over, and mounts the rampart on the other shore, his last shred of discord dies out in him, and he is everlastingly free. Now that he sees Christ in clear vision as he is, he is thoroughly and completely like him. This now is the reintegration, the restored order of the desires—the most wonderful work, the deepest and sublimest achievement of man's redemption. How it has been done, I have told you in a certain far off way—closer in a more interior way, I could not—for these roots of impulse and springs of movement are clean back of our consciousness. We never saw them, or descended where they are, we only see what wells up from them, and how they jostle us and drive us on, by impulsions first known when they are first felt. Come they whence? out of what murkiness, or steam, or smoke, or night, or morning, or heat, or noonday fire within? Little as we know whence, we do at least know well their awful power, and how they drive on thick and wild, hurling aside, as in storms of the mind, all self-regulative order, will, and principle. They war in our members, they chafe and seethe, and boil, and burn all unsatisfied, all disappointed, and the man wears out, and dies at last of anarchy, not knowing why. They breed aims that are meagre and mean, which is about the worst mischief that can befall any man whether young or old, they blast the affections, they smirch and smoke out the principles, they both drug and stimulate the will, as by contrary instigations, they addle, and muddle, and turn to confusion about every thing in us that belongs to the order of a well-ordered life. Being all in some sense misbegotten infestations of our sin—foul birds, jackals, hungry wolf packs, let loose in the mind—they cost us about all the worry and torment we suffer, and a great part of all fatal disaster beside. O if this terrible ferment could be stilled, settled in heaven's order, the wildness and bitter nonsense taken out, what a smoothing of this world it would be!

And this exactly is what our gospel undertakes and, as I have shown you, performs, or at least makes possible. I know not how it is that the religious teachers have so little to say of the desires when the gospel grace moves on them, in so great stress of attention. Perhaps it is because they class them with the merely instinctive motions, calling them irresponsible, and letting them be so ruled out of the account. Whereas they are at the very bottom, in one view, of all responsibility cast off, and the soul must be hampered, and galled, and fouled everlastingly by their misdoing, unless they are rectified. They are in fact the hell of the mind, and nothing is salvation which does not restore them. Clearly enough, we can not purge them or set them in order, by any course of training. We educate the intellect so as to harmonize it largely with nature, and law, and truth; we educate the taste, the sentiment, and to a certain extent the affections; also form, color, music; also the hand, the eye, the muscular force—

schools on schools, colleges on colleges we organize for these and other such kinds of training. But we have no colleges for the desires, and see not how we could have if we would. For where shall such kind of training begin, and by what course go on? Where are the diagrams? where is the logic? what objectivities are there to work by?

Diogenes, I believe, was the only professor in this line, and he undertook to moderate the desires by his gibes—much as he might still a tempest by whistling it down. And yet it is but fair to say that he did what he could. Should he soberly reprove them, they would only laugh at him. Should he reason with them, what care have they for reason? Inventing a gauge for them, where is the gauge? who shall keep it? when shall it be applied? No discipline requiring eyes can enter intelligence into these blind factors. Not amenable to reason, or capable of it; able on the other hand to obfuscate all reason; able to be a robber talent as against the strength and fair success and peace of all the others; able, in short, as was just now intimated, to make a hell of the mind, where is the heaven? Here in Christ Jesus, have I not shown you. In him, coming forth to die, have you not, after all, the needed university, the sufficient and complete discipline. Drawing near to him, as he to you, and finding how to walk with him, will not even your desire be learning tenderly to say, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” In this most difficult matter come and see what he will do for you; or rather what he will not do. Indeed I know not any other change in mind that can abate so many frictions, quell so many distractions, invigorate so great concentration of thought in such evenness of repose; nothing in short that will so much advance the possibilities of a good and great life.

And saying this I can not forget or keep out of mind the example of a once dear classmate and friend, who not long ago took his reward on high. He was not a brilliant man as we commonly speak, but there was a massive equipoise and justness in the harmonized action of his powers that was remarkable to us all. The robust life he had in body and mind and moral habit, required him never to be gathering up his equilibrium, for it was never lost. He was not in his own opinion at that time a Christian, but he scarcely could have been a more sound integer, if he had been, to others. A few months after his graduation, he wrote me that he was a good deal tossed by the question to what he should turn himself, as the engagement of his life. We had supposed that he would of course take his place in the law. But “the law,” said he, “is for money, and money I do not want. I have enough of that already (he belonged to an immensely rich family), therefore I am questioning whether I can do better than to put in my life with the best, even with Christ and his cause. I think I shall there be satisfied, and I do not see any thing else, where I can be.” The result

was that his whole desire fell into this current, and grew large upon him, getting volume to fill his great nature full; and he went into his clearly divine call as a preacher of Christ, with such energy and such visible devotion, that he was pushed forward shortly into a high, church leadership that widely signalized his life, and made his name, in his death and before it, a name of great public honor. And I think of him now as probably the happiest, best harmonized, noblest keyed man of all my acquaintance here. Would to God, my friends, that in such high example he might quicken you to follow.

And if he should, let me tell you, in this short catalogue of specifications, what the result will be.

You will be wishing less and doing more.

Your momentum will be heavier, and your impulse stronger.

You will have a more piercing intellectual perception.

Your inspirations will range higher, because your desires do.

Your serenity will be more perfect, as the sky of your mind is more pure.

Your enjoyments will be larger and less invaded by distractions.

You will have a more condensed vigor of will.

You will have a great deal less need of success, and a great deal more of it.

You will die less missing life, and more missed by it.

All which may God in his mercy grant.

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THOMAS GUTHRIE

1803 - 1873



THOMAS GUTHRIE, from *Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D.D.*, ed. David K. Guthrie and Charles J. Guthrie (London: Daldy, Isbister, & Co., 1875), frontispiece.

THOMAS GUTHRIE

1803	<i>Born at Brechin, Forfarshire, Scotland, on July 12</i>
1815	<i>Entered the University of Edinburgh</i>
1819	<i>Graduated from University of Edinburgh and entered theological training at the university</i>
1826	<i>Spent several months in Paris and returned to Scotland to take position as a bank manager</i>
1830	<i>Assumed first pastorate in Arbirlot</i>
1837	<i>Became a minister at Old Gray Friars Church in Edinburgh</i>
1840	<i>Became sole minister of St. John's Church</i>
1843	<i>Helped to organize the Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh</i>
1844	<i>Adopted position of total abstainer</i>
1862	<i>Elected moderator of the Free Church Assembly</i>
1864	<i>Assumed editorship of the Sunday Magazine</i>
1873	<i>Died February 24 in Edinburgh</i>

THOMAS GUTHRIE was deeply influenced by Thomas Chalmers. Both of them shared a ministry in Edinburgh, both of them helped establish the Free Church of Scotland, and both of them shared the common concern to make the Christian faith practical and to minister to the needs of all classes. Although Guthrie did not possess the intellectual powers of Chalmers, he surpassed his friend in oratorical ability.

LIFE AND TIMES

Born at Brechin, Forfarshire, Scotland, on July 12, 1803, Guthrie experienced nothing of poverty and financial hardship; his father was a well-to-do merchant and a faithful member of the Church of Scotland. Thomas was one of twelve

children. From his father he received his administrative and financial ability. From his mother he received his deep spiritual insights and fervent concern for evangelical Christianity. He also gained from her a sense of nonconformity: when he was a boy, his mother left the Established Church because she felt that it preached a watered-down version of the Christian faith. Later Thomas left the Established Church and helped establish the Free Church of Scotland.

Guthrie entered the University of Edinburgh when he was only twelve years old. He was especially interested in the physical sciences and read widely. Guthrie graduated from the university when he was sixteen and began theological training. Apparently he had received an inclination toward the ministry from the religious atmosphere of his home; he also had a natural compassion for people which drove him to seek a place where he could serve the needs of his fellow-man. Upon completion of his theological training, however, there was no church open to him. Those who held power in the Established Church disapproved of his theology, his attitudes, and his openness; therefore they denied him a pastorate.

In 1826 Guthrie spent several months in Paris studying and attending lectures on medicine and the physical sciences. He returned to Scotland and took a position as a bank manager; he served efficiently and well in the bank.

Finally, in 1830, after an appeal to friends in Parliament, he was granted his first pastorate, a small church in Arbirlot. The church was in a rural setting and the members were largely farmers and weavers. Guthrie threw himself vigorously into the task of vitalizing the church. He established cottage prayer meetings to establish a closer fellowship among the different sections of the parish. He started sabbath schools and founded a parish library. He spent much time in preparing sermons and ministering to the spiritual needs of his parishioners; his counsel and his visits brought new inspiration to many. He carried his religion into the secular life of the community. He vigorously advocated temperance and was instrumental in clearing the town of the two saloons which had thrived there. He established a bank for the poor and personally managed its affairs.

Guthrie enjoyed a fruitful and quiet pastorate in Arbirlot. But serious conflict was brewing in the Church of Scotland.

The conflict centered in whether or not a minister could be forced upon a church by the state. Some contended that the church should stop leaning on the state for support and become dependent upon voluntary contributions. Guthrie opposed this position, but he just as firmly opposed the view that the state had the right to interfere in the spiritual life of the church.

His effectiveness as a parish minister and his stand on the controversial patronage question made Guthrie well known; he especially attracted the attention of Thomas Chalmers. After seven years in Arbirlot, Guthrie was asked to become minister at Old Gray Friars Church in Edinburgh. He accepted and entered his new work with exuberance. He was especially interested in the needs of the poor and felt that the city parish would offer him an opportunity to fulfill this interest.

In 1840 he became sole minister of a new church, St. John's, located in the poorest section of Edinburgh. Guthrie established his residence near the church and began a singularly effective ministry to the poor and degraded people of the parish. He also appealed to the cultured classes of Edinburgh. His popularity surpassed that of any other minister in Scotland. Part of Guthrie's popularity can be attributed to his appearance, his personality, and his ability as an orator. He was intense in his enthusiasm, cheerful in disposition, and rollicking in joviality. He pursued his ministry with limitless exuberance. More an activist than a scholar, he nevertheless devoted himself intensely to the preparation of sermons.

His activities and concern for the poor contributed as much as anything to his popularity. He diligently visited the poor and talked with them about their feelings and needs. Guthrie did his best to minister to them through his preaching, but he was not content merely to preach; he established church programs to minister to their physical and financial needs. The activity for which he became most famous was the establishment of the "ragged schools," schools for the juvenile delinquents of Edinburgh. He believed that the underprivileged youth in the city deserved an education and an opportunity to become a contributing part of society.

Realizing the horrible effects of alcohol upon the poor, he became an advocate of total abstinence. He worked zealously to curtail the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages.

When the Free Church of Scotland was formed, he labored to provide adequate financial support for active ministers and

to provide pensions for retiring ministers. Never content simply to formulate ideas and let others do the work, he toiled in the establishment of the programs of the new Free Church and served for awhile as moderator of the Free Church Assembly. In 1864 his health broke: he resigned his pastorate and assumed the editorship of the *Sunday Magazine*. For years he continued to write and to contribute to publications. Though unable to be as active as he had been in earlier years, he maintained a deep concern for his denomination.

On February 24, 1873, he died. Always a dramatic man, Guthrie was dramatic even in death. While resting in the arms of his son, he looked up and said, "I am as helpless now in your arms as you were in mine when you were a babe." His funeral procession wound through a crowd of 30,000 spectators. The most touching feature of the crowd was the presence of 230 children from the original "ragged school" which he fostered, many of whom could have said what one little girl did say, "He was all the father I ever knew."¹

Guthrie was noted as an evangelistic preacher. His sermons were directed toward his hearers to gain a response. He wanted men to trust and to follow Christ. His evangelistic interest did not end with the borders of Scotland. He was a warm friend of foreign missions; both through sermons and organizational efforts he furthered the cause of missions.

A defender of the rights of the poor, a philanthropist, an innovator in education, and an ardent advocate of total abstinence, in these ways he displayed his social concern. Guthrie's life is evidence that a Christian pastor serves best when his ministry is balanced: for him evangelism did not exclude social concern, nor did openness of spirit cause him to shrink from denominational service. Service to one class of society did not cause him to rail at another class. Basically positive, he linked together evangelism, missions, pastoral care, and social concern in a refreshingly effective manner.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Thomas Guthrie was a pictorial preacher: his sermons more resemble painted canvases, rich with color, than analytical

1. David K. Guthrie and Charles J. Guthrie, *Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D. D., and Memoir*, 2 vols. (London: Daldy, Isbister, and Co., 1874), 2:493.

discourses. Once while visiting the studio of an artist, he criticized an unfinished picture and suggested some changes in the method of treating the subject. The painter took offense at this amateur criticism and replied, "Dr. Guthrie, remember you are a preacher and not a painter!" Guthrie shot back, "Beg your pardon, my good friend—I *am* a painter; only I paint in words, while you use brush and colors."

Some who read Guthrie's sermons regarded his word painting as a weakness rather than a gift. Bishop Wilberforce said of him, "Eloquent—familiar—slipshod. . . ." Others have agreed with that evaluation; they feel that Guthrie was neither a profound nor an original thinker—merely colorful, popular, and shallow.

That judgment is unfair and untrue; Guthrie's sermons are masterpieces of stylistic originality, and some of his thoughts are profound in their simplicity. Occasionally, it is true, he wastes words on decoration. But the basic impression of his sermons is one of a simple, well-organized, progressive theme, brilliantly illuminated by a variety of illustrations.

Guthrie's sermons were remarkable from the beginning of his career. During his years as a student in Edinburgh he heard many famous preachers; he observed that some of them had excellent sermons that failed because of poor delivery, while others with only average sermons succeeded because of good delivery. In his own first attempts to preach Guthrie was awkward and uncomfortable. From the first he attempted to preach without reading his manuscript so that he might have the advantage of looking his audience "fair in the face." But his memory failed him: he forgot his material, lost his place in the sermon, and quit sooner than he had planned. Once he was ready to give up and wrote, "I shall never succeed as a preacher!"

But he studied hard, wrote and rewrote his manuscripts, striving to express them in plain, pithy Anglo-Saxon language. As he wrote, he spoke aloud his sentences and phrases, driving them into his mind by repetition. He studied public speaking diligently until all of his bad mannerisms were corrected. Slowly his preaching improved, and the crowds grew. One of his elders at Arbirlot told a visitor that "after Maister Guthrie cam', the kirk was filled haigh up and laigh down." The folk would come miles and miles to hear him. The elder said that his sermons were full of illustrations: "Lots o' illustrations

frae the sea, and the earth, and the air, and anything that cam' handy. Illustrations extraordinar'! He was ready-wittit man; he never had to rummage long for a word."

Guthrie's illustrations were not spun out of thin air; he read widely and carefully and became an expert on more than one subject. He was so convincing in his illustrations that people believed he must have had previous experience in whatever field he was describing. Guthrie was once much amused by two comments made to him after a service:

I was preaching in St. Andrew's Church on Sunday night and had been greatly amused at two observations which were told me today—the one by Catherine Burns, who was in the back seat of the gallery, and heard a man (In allusion to my nautical illustrations) say to his neighbor before her, "He is an old sailor; at least, he was a while at sea!" And Miss Gilfillan heard one say to another as he came down the stair, "If he *stick* (fail) the minister trade, the young man would make his bread as a surgeon!"²

One of his hearers said, "In his logic you might often detect a flaw; in his illustrations, never." Guthrie might well have spoken impromptu with great success; but all of his sermons were carefully written and revised. A contemporary said, "He could have extemporized a sermon at any time, and thus saved himself much labour. But, during all the seven years he was in Arbirlot, I believe he never entered the pulpit without having his discourse written and committed. . . . I have found him on a Saturday night amending and correcting what he had written, and filling his mind with the subject."³

Guthrie's method of preparation was described by the Rev. J. C. Burns, his brother-in-law, who said that when Guthrie came to Arbirlot he became a more devoted Bible student than before and prepared his sermons with great care. He bought the commentaries of Scott and Henry and other works but made comparatively little use of them. His sermons were prepared principally through the aid of *Cruden's Concordance* and Chalmers' *Scripture References*:

2. Ibid., 2:189.

3. John Edwards, *Nineteenth Century Preachers and Their Methods* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1902), pp. 59-60.

He preferred Cruden and *himself* to them all—i.e., his own first and fresh impressions of the meaning of the passage he was expounding; and these he set himself to convey in the plainest and most familiar language, and in the most vivid and telling form; so that, while his exegesis might sometimes be at fault, and was always defective, he never failed to get and keep the attention of his hearers, and to put them in possession of what he wished them to know.⁴

But the greatest quality of Guthrie, the principal secret of his success, has been overlooked. Guthrie was not merely a teller of richly ornate stories, a colorful word spinner; he understood the subtle art of communication better than other preachers of his time and better than most since his time. He described the method by which he arrived at his ability as a communicator, and though it is a lengthy description, it is full of amazing insights:

When I went to Arbirlot I knew pretty well how to speak sermons, but very little about how to compose them; so I set myself vigorously to study how to illustrate the great truths of the gospel and enforce them, so that there should be no sleepers in the church, no wandering eyes, but everywhere an eager attention. Savingly to convert my hearers was not within my power; but to command their attention, to awaken their interest, to touch their feelings and instruct their minds, was—and I was determined to do it.

With this end, I used the simplest, plainest terms, avoiding anything vulgar, but always where possible employing the Saxon tongue—the mother tongue of my hearers. I studied the style of the addresses which the ancient and inspired prophets delivered to the people of Israel, and saw how, differing from dried disquisitions or naked statement of truths, they abounded in metaphors, figures and illustrations. I turned to the gospels and found that he who knew what was in a man, what could best illuminate a subject, win the attention, and move the heart, used parables or illustrations, stories, comparisons, drawn from the scenes of nature and familiar life, to a large extent in his teachings; in

4. Guthrie and Guthrie, 1:319.

regard to which a woman—a type of the masses—said, “The parts of the Bible I like best are the *likes*.”

Taught by such models and encouraged in my resolution by such authorities, I resolved to follow, though it should be at a vast distance, these ancient masters of the art of preaching; being all the more ready to do so, as it would be in harmony with the natural turn and bias of my own mind.

I was careful to observe by the faces of my hearers and also by the account the more intelligent of my Sunday class gave of my discourses, the style and character of those parts which had made the deepest impression, that I might cultivate it.

After my discourse was written I spent hours in correcting it; always for that purpose keeping a blank page on my manuscript opposite a written one, cutting out dry bits, giving point to dull ones, making clear any obscurity, and narrative parts more graphic, throwing more pathos into appeals, and copying God in his works by adding the ornamental to the useful. The longer I have lived and composed, I have acted more and more according to the saying of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his *Lectures on Painting*, that God does not give excellence to men but as the reward of labor.⁵

Guthrie’s natural observations on the art of communication are strikingly correct. Notice the principles he instinctively followed: he observed the response of his audience as he preached; he spoke in the simple street language of his audience; he noticed the success in communication that the prophets and Christ himself enjoyed through the use of parables; he must have had the first “talk-back” session in history as he listened to the comments of his Sunday class after the sermon; in revising his sermons, he worked for clarity and graphic expression. As a result, Guthrie was successful in communicating to his audiences when others around him were failing because of tedious, didactic discourses.

The advice he gave to a young preacher briefly summarized his philosophy of preaching:

An illustration or an example drawn from nature, a Bible story or any history, will, like a nail, often hang

5. *Ibid.*, 1:160–62.

up a thing which otherwise would fall to the ground. . . . Mind "the three P's." In every discourse the preacher should aim at Proving, Painting, and Persuading; in other words, addressing the Reason, the Fancy, and the Heart.⁶

Guthrie's daily schedule showed his diligence. For many years he rose at five o'clock, summer and winter. By six o'clock he was writing at his desk, remaining there until nine, the family breakfast hour. In this way he devoted some eighteen hours a week for his Sunday sermon; he kept it "simmering in his mind all the week through." Guthrie had a large family, and he tried to spend as much time with them as he could, but his evenings were usually filled by the numerous addresses he delivered in the surrounding country.

When Guthrie entered the pulpit he made a striking impression. Great crowds of visitors, mingling with many of the local citizens, packed his church; the rich and poor alike found their way to the slum parish where his church was located in Edinburgh. All were struck by his presence: he was six feet, three inches tall, broad-shouldered, with a dark complexion. In his later days, his gray hair made him distinguished looking. He had a magnificent voice, deep, powerful and well-modulated. His sermons were delivered with great fervor and dramatic expression.

His sermons today do not appear to be as beautifully simple as Guthrie intended them to be, but remember that many years have passed since he first delivered them and word usage has changed. Even so, their beauty and power are still evident. Countless descriptive passages could be cited, but these are among his best. From "True Religion":

The sky which, whether studded with stars or hung in gold and purple, or one azure field over which the sun wheels his glowing course, presents always a glorious, occasionally a very extraordinary appearance. Not one but two suns are there; and in the Arctic regions, as if to compensate the long periods when their skies are left to perpetual night, there are sometimes three—blazing away in brilliant rivalry, and shedding increase of light on sparkling icebergs and the dreary wastes of snow.

6. *Ibid.*, 2:190.

A different style of description is presented in the sermon "The Inheritance":

Let me illustrate this point by a reference to the case of Lazarus. . . . He emerges from the grave's black mouth a living, yet a startling, hideous object, from whose appalling form the crowd reels back, and terror-stricken sisters might be excused for shrinking. Shrouded like a corpse, smelling of the noisome grave, with the yellow linen muffling eyes and mouth, every door had been shut against him, and the streets of Bethany cleared of flying crowds by such a frightful apparition.

Or this passage describing Paul's conversion, from "The Christian's Life":

A young man, yet stopping at no half measures, but going right at the work of blood, he had already made his name a terror to the whole Church. Dead to pity, nor mother's tears, nor infant's cries could move him. A tiger that has tasted blood, he has set out one day anew; and, breathing flames and slaughter against the saints, is rushing on his prey. In a moment, on a sudden, he is arrested in mid-career, changed into a little child; the lion becomes a lamb; the leopard lies down beside the kid. Saul of Tarsus is another man.

Almost every paragraph of every sermon could be cited as an example of colorful description; yet Guthrie never loses himself or the theme of his sermon in a sea of paint. The note of the Christian herald sounds plainly through the preaching of Thomas Guthrie.

Sermons

TRUE RELIGION

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,
To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to
keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

THE SKY which, whether studded with stars or hung in gold and purple, or one azure field over which the sun wheels his glowing course, presents always a glorious, occasionally a very extraordinary appearance. Not one but two suns are there; and in the Arctic regions, as if to compensate the long periods when their skies are left to perpetual night, there are sometimes three—blazing away in brilliant rivalry, and shedding increase of light on sparkling icebergs and the dreary wastes of snow. Yet, though there were not three but three hundred suns, only one of them could be a true sun. The others, which are produced by a peculiar state of the atmosphere, being, though bright, yet mere images, are analogous, to borrow a familiar illustration, to the multiplied candles that shine on the silvered facets of a reflector.

As with these suns, so is it with the various religious systems of the world. They are many; numbered not by units, but hundreds. Almost every new country that voyagers have discovered has, with new trees and new flowers and new animals, presented a new form of faith. The world has no building big enough to hold all the gods that men do worship. Yet, though greater in number, and much greater in essential differences, than the races of mankind—for, differing in color and contour as the Negro and the white man do, they meet in Adam, God having made of one blood all the families of the earth—among these many religions there is but one true; the rest are false—false as the mock suns of an Arctic sky. For as God is one, truth is one; and though the true may be separated from the false by a line as sharp as the edge of a razor, still they stand as irreconcilable as if they were parted by the whole distance of the poles. There are

Reprinted from Thomas Guthrie, *Man and the Gospel and Our Father's Business* (New York: E. B. Treat & Co., n.d.), pp. 61–80.

“lords many, and gods many,” yet but one true God; even so there are many faiths and forms of religion, and yet but one “pure and undefiled before God.”

It has been said there are many ways of going out of the world, and but one of coming into it; and it may be said there are many roads to hell, and but one to heaven. No doubt, in St. John’s vision, where the final state and place of the blessed was represented as a glorious city, with streets of pure gold, and walls built of precious gems, all shining in light, that fell neither from sun nor moon, but streamed out in dazzling effulgence from the throne of God, he saw not one gate, but twelve. These gates, each a pearl, and opening on streets of gold, had a meaning. Standing open, and never shut by day or night, they betoken the security enjoyed by the blessed inhabitants; and also how open heaven has been made to every sinner who seeks it through the blood of Christ. Approach it in the right way, and whatever may have been your character, and is your age, country, or condition, you are free to enter unchallenged—without let or hindrance. No armed sentinels, as at earthly palaces, guard the gates that invite alike the feet of prince and beggar—Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But by these twelve gates St. John never meant that there are as many different ways of getting into heaven. This portion of sacred Scripture is a figure. It is to be understood within limits; and is no more to be pushed too far than many of our Lord’s parables. There is but one way to the kingdom of God—to a state of grace in this world, and a state of glory in the next. I, says Jesus, am the way, the truth, the life; not one of many ways, but the one way. Come unto *me*, he also says, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; and in perfect harmony with these declarations is that of an apostle, “There is no name given under heaven whereby man can be saved but the name of Jesus.” There is but one true religion “pure and undefiled before God.”

We have this religion in our Bible. There it flows unadulterated and undefiled, fresh and pure as it came from the upper spring. Let us draw it at this well—not taking our faith from man or minister, but directly from the word of God; lest it should be like water that acquires a poisonous quality from the leaden pipes it flows through. Yet though we have the true religion here, how many mistake what religion is; its real character; and in what its true life consists! They fancy themselves to be religious; and that all is right when all is wrong with them. There is a sense in which he that doubteth is damned; but are not many damned just because they never doubt? They go on, satisfied with themselves; not doubting but that they are on the right course, when every step they take leads them further and further astray. Sincere they may be, but it is not enough to be sincere. Sincerity and zeal,

as well as ease of mind, and peace of conscience, may but more surely seal their fatal, utter ruin. For it stands to reason that the faster and further a man goes, if he take the wrong direction at starting, he goes but the further wrong: the more sail she carries, the more steam she puts on, the greater the impetus with which she takes the reef, the ship is sooner and more surely wrecked. What need, therefore, since there is but one safe course to heaven, that we should often take soundings!

Why was that noble steamer which was wrecked some time ago on the coast of England lost? not simply because she was caught in the sea mist, nor because she was often thrown out of her course by porting her helm to avoid collisions, but from false security—for want of soundings! They had no doubt they were right, till the dreadful cry of breakers and a sudden crash too late revealed their danger. And if we would not make shipwreck of the faith, nor run the risk of never discovering our mistake till we find ourselves at the door of hell, or stand at the bar of judgment, to hear with black amazement the unexpected sentence, “Depart from me, for I have never known you, ye workers of iniquity,” we will try our religion—put it to the test—see whether it is true religion, that which, to use the words of St. James, is “pure and undefiled before God and the Father.”

What, then, is the character of this religion? There are two ways of describing a thing—first, showing what it is not; and second, what it is. Now, to follow, meanwhile, the first of these methods, I purpose showing that

True religion does not lie *in talking about it*.

In our Church and country the pulpit has all the speaking. In Jewish synagogues, as appears from our Lord’s history, it was not so. Any person in the assembly who had got anything good to say, might say it. It appears from the Epistles that this custom was engrafted on the Christian Church, and flourished in its early days; and some who abused this privilege, and, being talkative and conceited, were, perhaps, ever thrusting themselves on the public notice, may have been in his eye, when St. James, laying down a rule valuable at all ages, and at all times, said, Be swift to hear, and slow to speak. Though the customs of the Church have changed with time, and speaking in public is now commonly confined to the pulpit, there is still danger—and especially in these times of religious excitement—of fancying, because we can and do talk about religion, that we are religious.

There are individual as well as national peculiarities; and, in this country, the common error certainly is not to talk too much, but too little, about religion; or, at least, too little religiously. In Scotland, at least, we are taciturn; and carry our proverbial *canniness* to a fault. How little do those of us who are undoubtedly on the way to heaven resemble a body of emigrants on shipboard—on their way

across the ocean to America! Listen to that group of men, women, and children that have seen their native hills sink below the wave, and, now leaning over the bows, are looking ahead! Compared with theirs, how little does our conversation turn on the land in prospect; its employments; its enjoyments; the friends that wait our coming? Throwing off false shame, let us be more faithful to the souls of men, and to a world that lieth in wickedness; and much more free in converse with each other about the Prince and the things of the heavenly kingdom—after the manner of the men of old, of whom it is said, They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.

Still, it should not be forgotten, lest any deceive themselves, that to talk about religion, ministers and sermons, missions and missionaries, religious schemes and books, revivalists and revivals, is not religion. Some have been the most fluent talkers about these things who felt them least. Shallow rivers are commonly noisy rivers; and the drum is loud because it is hollow. Fluency and feeling don't always go together. On the contrary, some men are most sparing of speech when their feelings are most deeply engaged. I have been told that there is an awful silence in the ranks before the first gun is fired, and little talking heard during the dreadful progress of the battle, or sound, save the roar of cannon, the cries of wounded, the shouts of attack, the bursts of musketry, and bugles sounding the charge. And I have also heard men say, that when the ship is laboring for her life, and every moment may decide her fate, and whether she shall clear reef or headland hangs in anxious suspense, there is no talking, nothing heard amid the roaring of the storm but the voice of officers, as they shout forth their orders—to cut away the mast—let go the sails—or put the helm hard a-port. Deep passions, like deep waters, often run silent; and men in earnest are more given to act than to talk. True, Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh; still, the fuller the heart is, the less fluent sometimes is the speech. There are things too deep for utterance. Strong gratitude, deep love, are not fluent; nor is intense anxiety. The sight of her child wrapped in flames, or tottering on the edge of a precipice, has paralyzed its mother; rooted to the ground—she has gazed in speechless horror, unable to raise a shriek, or move a foot to save it.

Besides, owing, perhaps, to constitutional peculiarities, the religion of some has its most perfect emblem in Christ's own words, Ye are the light of the world. It is a thing seen, not heard; it shines, but it makes no sound; not often found on their lips, but always in their lives. Who, that ever heard, has forgotten a story told by Dr. Chalmers when he pleaded for the right of Christian congregations to reject a minister against whom they felt, but could not state, objections? A woman sought admission to the Lord's table. At her examination she broke down; unable to give her pastor any satisfactory answers, she was dumb, or her replies were such as made her appear stupid and igno-

rant. He did not feel that he could admit her to the table of the Lord; and told her so. Cut to the heart she rose; she reached the door; but, ere she left, with the tear shining in her eye, and in tones that went to the good man's heart, she said, referring to our Lord, "Sir, though I cannot speak for Him, I could die for Him!" Blessed speech! and blessed woman! the gate of heaven was opening to her advancing steps!

Such love to Jesus Christ is the soul of true religion. And without their becoming loud talkers, or making a parade of piety, it will lead those that feel its power to "exhort one another daily"; to try to bring sinners to the Saviour; and—as many who have overcome a false modesty are now doing—to seize all opportunities of dealing faithfully with men about their souls. Why should not we tell others the way to heaven if we ourselves have found it? Why should not we warn a man who, unconscious of his danger, is approaching the brink of ruin? Why should not we snatch the poisoned chalice from a brother's lips? Why should not we reach a hand down to the drowning, and pluck him from the jaws of death, and seat him beside us on the rock where there is room for both? If people are loud in the praises of the physician who has cured them of some deadly malady—recommending others to trust and seek his skill, why should not Christ's people crown Him with equal honors, commend Him to a dying world, and proclaim what He has done for them? Let them say with David, Come, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell what He hath done for my soul; and tread in the steps of the Samaritan who threw away her pitcher, and, running to the city, brought them all out—crying, Come see a man who hath told me all things that I have ever done.

It is a bad thing ostentatiously to parade religion; but it is a base thing for a Christian man to be ashamed of it; not to stand by his colors; by his silence, if not his speech, to deny his Master; to sneak away, like a coward, out of the fight. Stand up for Christ everywhere; speak for Him; suffer the scorn of the world for Him; and, among the ungodliest crew, quit you like men, saying,

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause,
Maintain the glory of His cross,
And honor all His laws.

Jesus, my Lord! I know His name,
His name is all my boast;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.

Religion does not lie in *cherishing bitter feelings towards those who differ from us.*

"Be slow to wrath," says St. James, "for the wrath of man worketh

not the righteousness of God. If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." From a small town that lay in the bosom of gently swelling hills, rose, some with spires and some without them, three or four churches, belonging to the chief denominations of our country—the sign at once of our religious liberties and religious earnestness. On a sweet summer evening a traveller looked along the valley on this peaceful scene, when a shower of rain was falling. Suddenly the sun broke out, and flung a bright bow on the cloud, that, like that of mercy, discharged its showers on all. The rainbow encircled within its arms suburb and city, lofty church and humble meeting-house. And was it not a true and happy fancy that saw in this heavenly bow an emblem of that covenant which, irrespective of minor differences, embraces all believers within the same arms of mercy?

How different from this genial spirit that of gloomy bigotry! Scowling on charity, it would probably pronounce that thought about the rainbow to have more poetry than piety in it. I would not be uncharitable even to uncharitableness; but it is very unlovely. It holds the truth; but it is in unrighteousness. It contends for the truth; but it is with unholy passions—often persuading itself that it is religious when it is but rancorous. Some appear to think that to be narrow-minded is to be heavenly-minded. A great mistake! The black, bitter sloe of the hedges appears in the garden with the fair hues and sweet juices of the plum; and it is certainly no proof that a man's temper is sanctified that it is sour. Christians never should forget the meaning hidden in the very form which the Holy Spirit assumed when He dropped from the skies on our Saviour's head. The rapacious eagle, grasping thunderbolts in his talons, and sacred to Jove among the heathens, or rushing down from the rock on his quarry, has been the favorite ensign of bloody conquerors, and ambitious kings; now, not it, but that gentle bird which, they say, has no gall, and is sacred to love, and whose showy plumage was never dyed with a victim's blood, descends yonder by the quiet banks of Jordan on the head of Jesus. I do not say that religious men have never cherished an exclusive and narrow spirit. I admit that some excellent men have done so.

Still, it is not religion to speak bitterly of those who differ from us; it is not religion to minister at the altar with "strange fire"; it is not religion to serve the cause of a loving God with unlovely passions; it is not religion to defend Christ's crown with other weapons than His own sword; it is not religion to be serious on light, and great on little things; it is not religion to exalt points to the place of principles; it is not religion to contend as earnestly for forms of worship as for the faith of the gospel; it is anything but religion to dip our pens in gall, to give the tongue unbridled license, and so to speak

of others as to recall these words of Scripture—Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. There is no religion in the narrow, sectarian, exclusive prejudices which say, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

In this imperfect state, it is perhaps as impossible for two parties, as it is for flint and steel, to come into collision without eliciting some sparks of fire. It were foolish to expect that there should be nothing said or done in a time of religious controversy, which good men will see no reason afterwards to regret and to recall; for that were to expect lesser men to be greater than apostles—holier than St. Paul and Barnabas, between whom, as we are told, there rose a “sharp contention.” Nor even after the controversies have ceased, need we wonder that their unhappy influences do not always, and all at once, cease with them. That were such a miracle as was only seen in Galilee, when at Christ’s voice the winds and waves went down at once, and together. It is with human passion as with the sea, when violently agitated, stirred by some storm to its briny depths; it continues, hours after the wind has ceased, to swell, and heave, and roll its foaming breakers on the beach. We are not to wonder that wounds received in controversy, like those received in battle, take some time to heal. It is reasonable to expect that; though, as it were a bad sign of a man’s constitution, if his wounds, however deep, turned into running sores, there is something wrong, unhallowed, and unchristian in our spirit, if grace does not soften the asperities, and time close the wounds of controversy.

There is a time of peace, says Solomon, as well as a time of war; and when fields, white for the harvest, call Christians to sheath their swords and put in their sickles, he must be a stranger to the spirit of the gospel whose cry is, My voice is still for war. War? “They are for war, I am for peace,” said David. And they who have imbibed most of the spirit of their Master, even when contending for the faith, will engage in quarrels with reluctance, and end them with pleasure. The Christian graces, like spice-bearing trees, grow best under serene and sunny skies. Nor should Christian men ever enter keenly into any controversy that is not vital, unless it involve matters of paramount importance. The theology of our life should be the theology of the death-bed, amid whose solemn, deepening shadows small points and matters of form dwindle out of sight; or rather are lost in the blaze of coming glory. The loftiest piety ever attaches the lowest importance to party badges and ecclesiastical distinctions; and the holier the Christian grows, he will more and more resemble the holly tree, which, as it rises, and gets away from the ground, and shoots its top up to heaven, loses the thorny prickles from its leaves. Be assured that tenderness of heart, and gentleness of spirit, mark the highest form of Christianity; and that the true fire of the Spirit, the

celestial flame—like that which fell at Pentecost, blazes but never burns. Let the same mind be in you, therefore, that was in Jesus Christ; otherwise, whatever be our creed, we are none of His.

Religion does not lie *in knowledge, or the observance of religious forms.*

A man who rose on the wings of genius from obscurity to the highest fame, was, on an occasion of a visit to Edinburgh, walking with one who plumed himself on his wealth, and rank, and ancient family. As they strolled along the street, Burns—for of him I speak—encountered a country acquaintance, attired in rustic dress; he seized him by the hand; and leaving his companion offended and astonished, he linked his arm in the rustic's. With a manner that bespoke esteem and admiration of his humble friend, the poet made his way through the brilliant crowd that worshipped his genius, and ruined his morals. On returning, he was met with expressions of surprise that he could so demean himself, and stoop to walk the streets among his fashionable admirers with one in such a vulgar garb. "Fool," said Burns, his dark eye flashing, and his soul rising above the base pleasures and pursuits he had sunk to in high society, and returning to its own native region of noble sentiments; "Fool," he said, "it was not the dress, the peasant's bonnet and the hoddie gray, I spoke to, but to the man within; the man who beneath that bonnet has a head, and under that hoddie gray a heart better than yours, or a thousand such as yours."

Nobly said! A true distinction—too often forgotten, between the man and his externals! Nor is this distinction anywhere more true, important, vital, than in the Church of God. Be it gorgeous like that of Rome in her stately temples, or simple like that of our fathers, with the blue heavens for a canopy, a lone glen for their church, the gray stones of the moor for communion tables, and, for music to the wild strain of their psalms, the dash of a waterfall or the roar of breakers—the ritual of a church is but her dress. And what more than his dress is a man's profession of piety, his religious forms and observances—those peculiar to the Sabbath, or common to every day? They may be worn by the dead as well as the living. While St. Paul exhorts us to "hold fast the form of sound words," he speaks of some as "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" as "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; and there may be much of that in these days when, in contrast to the profane swearing, and deep drinking, and loose morals, and open neglect of worship both in the family and in the church, of the last century, religion is rather fashionable than otherwise. She now walks, to use John Bunyan's figure, in golden slippers on the sunny side of the street.

Let us beware! Form, dress, and paint are not life. In the studio of the artist, and, in the shape of man or woman, there stands a figure,

the first sudden sight of which strikes most with surprise, and makes some start with fear. Is it dead or alive? Supplied with joints that admit of motion, attired in the common garb of men or women, seated in a chair, or standing in easy attitude on the floor, it might pass for life, but for that still and changeless posture, those speechless lips, and fixed staring eyes. It is a man of wood. Cold paint, not warm blood, gives the color to its cheek; no busy brain thinks within that skull; no kind heart loves, or fervid passions burn within that breast. The *lay figure* that the artist dresses up to help him to represent the folds, the lights and shadows of the drapery, it is but death attired in the clothes of life; and, like a hypocrite or formalist in the sight of God, is offensive rather than otherwise. And, as the dress there, however rich and costly, true and skilfully arranged, does not make a living man, no more do the observance of religion, attendance at church, going to the communion, closet prayer, family worship, the daily reading of God's Word, make a religious man—a living Christian.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, says St. James; and, to take that example, though some may think they are religious because they read the Scriptures daily, religion does not consist in reading God's Word, nor in going to church to hear it preached, Sabbath by Sabbath. I say nothing against hearing; God forbid. We are not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together. It is well to hear; to pitch our tent where manna falls; to sit by the pool where an angel stirs the waters, and descends to heal; to go up to the mountain of the Lord, that, surmounted by the cross, and trodden by the feet of saints, has conducted many to the skies; and on which, like mountain ranges that attract the clouds, and are watered by many showers that never fall in the valleys, the blessing most frequently and fully descends—God loveth the gates of Zion more than all the tabernacles of Jacob.

But will hearing a discourse on fire warm a man? on meat, feed him? on medicine, cure him? If not, no more will it save us to know all about the Saviour. It will no more take a man to heaven than it will take him to France, or Rome, or Jerusalem, that he knows the way. We must go, as well as know—travel, as well as be able to trace out the route. We get Christ presented to our acceptance every day; but what of that? What will that avail us, unless we accept of Him? Have we done that? It is not an offered but an accepted Saviour—nor is it the word heard, but the word done, diligently, habitually, prayerfully done, that will bring us to the kingdom of heaven.

Otherwise, hearing, according to St. James, is like merely looking into a glass, which never yet arranged woman's hair, or washed man's dirty face. We see the faces of others, not our own—not our own otherwise than by reflection. The wild beauty of the forest bends over some placid pool to feed her vanity, and admire charms that

unadorned are adorned the most; and before an artificial mirror her refined and polished sisters, with ornaments borrowed from birds, and beasts, and worms, the mines of earth and depths of ocean, may stand bedecked, and armed for conquests over fools. To such a looking-glass, but cast for another purpose, the apostle St. James compares God's Word. It is given of God that we may see ourselves spotted and stained with sin; and seeing that, may go to wash away the foul pollution in the blood of Christ. And the mere hearers of the word, before whom I would hold up this heavenly glass to show the dark stains that lie not on their faces, but on their souls, what are they? They are like one that having seen his foul face reflected in a faithful mirror, goes away, not to wash it, but to forget all about it. Their religion lies all in hearing—not at all in doing. It is therefore vain.

To know the way to heaven, sometimes to cast a longing eye in that direction, and by fit and start to make a feeble effort heavenwards, can end in nothing. Man must get the Spirit of God. Thus only can we be freed of the shackles that bind the soul to earth, the flesh, and sin. I have seen a captive eagle, caged far from its distant home, as he sat mournful-like on his perch, turn his eye sometimes heavenwards; there he would sit in silence, like one wrapt in thought, gazing through the bars of his cage up into the blue sky; and, after a while, as if noble but sleeping instincts had suddenly awoke, he would start and spread out his broad sails, and leap upward, revealing an iron chain that, usually covered by his plumage, drew him back again to his place. But though this bird of heaven knew the way to soar aloft, and sometimes, under the influence of old instincts, decayed but not altogether dead, felt the thirst for freedom, freedom was not for him, till a power greater than his own proclaimed liberty to the captive, and shattered the shackle that bound him to his perch. Nor is there freedom for us till the Holy Spirit set us free, and, by the lightning force of truth, breaks the chains that bind us to sin—till, with the way laid open by the blood of His covenant, Jesus says to the Spirit—Loose him, and let him go; let him fly; let him spurn the earth, and, on the wings of faith and prayer, soar away upward to the gates of glory. For that end, come Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Belonging to a church, or sect, said Baron Bunsen on his death-bed, is nothing. The direction which the mind of that great and good man took on some theological subjects is much to be regretted—very much to be deplored. We have no sympathy with it. Yet, in those solemn hours when the shadow of death falls on the bed, and the depths of the soul rise to the surface, few have borne themselves more Christianly than Bunsen, or in their dying utterances, with failing, faltering breath, brought out more clearly, more beautifully, more attractively, the spirit of pure, undefiled, living, loving, true religion. I have spoken of it; he speaks it. Let us, for an example of

the religion that lies not dead in forms, but lives in faith and love, turn our steps to the chamber where Bunsen is dying, amid the glories of a brilliant sunset—emblem of his own—the tears of his family, and the regrets of the world: “My best experience,” he said, “is that of having known Jesus Christ. I leave this world without hating any one. No, no hatred: hatred is an accursed thing. Oh! how good it is to look upon life from this elevation. One then perceives what an obscure existence we have led upon earth. Upward! upward! It becomes not darker; but always brighter, brighter. I am now in the kingdom. O my God, how beautiful are thy tabernacles! Let us part in Jesus Christ. God is life, love—love that wills; will that loves. I see Christ, and I see God through Christ. I am dying, and I wish to die; I offer my blessing, the blessing of an old man, to all who desire it; I die in peace with all the world. Those who live in Christ, in loving Him, those are His. Those who do not live by His life do not belong to Him, by whatever name they may call themselves, and whatever confession of faith they may sign. Belonging to a church or sect is nothing. I see clearly that we are all sinners; we have only Christ in God; all else is nothing. Christ is the Son of God, and we are His children only when the spirit of love which was in Christ is in us.”

This is a voice from the grave; or rather from those heavens to which, notwithstanding their mistakes and errors, true believers in Christ go to join their Lord. How grand these last utterances of a long, honored, brilliant, and useful life! One among the greatest of his age in learning, and science, and humanity, and statesmanship, Bunsen left the world with this sentence ringing in its ears—To love God in Christ is all: to belong to a church or sect is nothing—all else is nothing.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

THE DARKEST SCENES of our Lord's history, like a cloud with the moon behind it, shine with a silver lining. For example, he was born in a stable, where, as his dying head was pillowed on thorns, his infant head was pillowed on straw; but then, angels announced the event. Way-worn and weary, he sat on Jacob's well to beg of a Samaritan a drink of water; but then, he told the astonished woman all her history, and, reading her heart, sent her away on flying feet to cry, Come, see a man who has told me all things that I have ever done. The tumbling sea, the rolling boat, the howling wind, the sheets of spray, could not wake him, so worn out his frame and deep his slumbers; but when he was awakened and rose up, ah, then, “The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee”; he said but the word—and moon, and stars, and boat, and girdling mountains lay mirrored on a placid lake. At the grave of Lazarus, groaning like a man and weeping like a woman, he was overcome of grief; but then, he overcame death there. He stood betrayed in the garden, sold by a base disciple for thirty pieces of silver; but then, there came a hand out of the darkness that dealt his enemies a blow which sent them staggering, prostrate to the ground.

Thus, amid the deepest meanness, there was a touch of majesty; and his sun set, as it rose, in glory. He died, but who ever died as he? He closed his life amid acts of Godhead; pronouncing pardon with lips pale in death, and with a hand nailed to the cross opening heaven to a penitent thief. Thus his glory, like lightning, shone brighter in the depths of night than in the glare of day. By that, his last, noblest act, we are kept from despair. How has it sent us away to bend over the dying, and, when eyes were glazed, and lips were speechless, to pour into the ear of an expiring profligate, mercy for the chief of sinners! The case of the thief—most illustrious example of the freeness of the grace of God—teaches us to despair nowhere, and of none. I fancy there is no man in this house of a right mind, but breathes freer as he reads it. Brightest trophy of sovereign mercy, and of power omnipotent to save, that thief has led the way of thousands to the gate of heaven; and happy the man that goes in there by the merits of a crucified Saviour, though he goes in at the back of a crucified thief!

As illustrious as that case, is the conversion related in this passage. Since this, in the sudden arrest and conversion of Saul, is as demon-

strative of the power as that is of the freeness of the grace of God. Standing on a platform when the train, shooting out of some dark tunnel, dashes by with the rush of an eagle, and the roar of thunder; or, seated upon some lofty rock, when the mountain wave, driven on by the hurricane, and swelling, foaming, curling, bursts, and, passing on either side, rushes to roar along the beach—than these I know no situation, under heaven, where a man more feels his weakness. What hand could stop these flying wheels; or, seizing the billow by its snowy mane, hold it back? Only one—God's own right hand.

Great miracle that! A greater is here, in the sudden, instant, omnipotent arrest of Saul. With what impetus he moved on his career; leaving Christ's other enemies lagging, far behind. A young man, yet stopping at no half measures, but going right at the work of blood, he had already made his name a terror to the whole Church. Dead to pity, nor mother's tears, nor infant's cries could move him. A tiger that has tasted blood, he has set out one day anew; and, breathing flames and slaughter against the saints, is rushing on his prey. In a moment, on a sudden, he is arrested in mid-career, changed into a little child; the lion becomes a lamb; the leopard lies down beside the kid. Saul of Tarsus is another man. The hand that bent the arch of heaven has bent his iron will; and, now yielding himself up to Christ, he lies at his feet to say in words, to which I would direct your attention in the hope that God will bend also every stubborn sinner to adopt the language, "Lord"—my God, my Saviour, my sovereign, my all in all—"what wilt thou have me to do?" Before turning your attention to this question I would remark—

I. All men require to undergo the change that was wrought on Saul of Tarsus. Did you ever see a dead child laid out by tender hands, or even sculptured in cold marble? With its air of calm repose, how beautiful it looks! Here death seems divested of his terrors. It looks so living—I had almost said angel-like—that it needs, as it were, but that we should touch it, or speak, to wake it up; and wake again the voice that often cheered a mother's heart, and woke her from happy slumbers. It is hard to believe that the child is dead; yet there is something harder to believe. With no bad passions stamped on its open brow, an infant looks so guiltless, and is so guileless; looks so innocent, and is so ignorant of evil—that kneeling at a mother's feet, with sunbeams falling on its golden locks, its little hands held up to heaven, its lips lisping a simple prayer, it is hard, a very hard thing, to believe that this creature is dead in sin; and that, as storms lie sleeping in the calm bosom of the deep, and thunder and lightning in the clear blue heavens, a thousand crimes are sleeping in that infant bosom. Yet so it is. It is dead in sin! and so are we all—"death has passed on all men, because all have sinned."

If so, you may say, how useless to speak to sinners! Who speaks to the dead? It seems, in that case, as useless to address unconverted men, as it were for me to go and take my stand in a churchyard, and, turning a grave-stone into a pulpit, address myself to the hollow skulls and mouldering bones around; and in that case preaching seems as mad as a mother's cries when she hangs over the dead, and, calling her boy by name, implores him to speak to her. Yet, "I am not mad, most noble Festus." Not mad—no! Have not I seen life spring up under almost as unlikely circumstances? No longer ago than last winter, when the ground lay covered with lingering snows, and the earth lay bare, cold, and wan, like a shrouded corpse, there came a sudden thaw, to reveal what it was most curious and wonderful to see—a plant, fair herald of the spring, had risen up, and leafed, and blown out into full beauty, beneath its snowy crust. Is God less omnipotent in one kingdom than another? My trust is in him who has wrought greater wonders in the realms of grace than in the fields of nature.

True, I am no Christ to repair to the grave, saying, Lazarus, come forth! or go to churchyards with voice as mighty to awake the dead as the dormant. Still, I do not stand here like the king of Israel, when, with the letter in his trembling hand, he looked on the loathsome leper to exclaim, Am I a god, to kill and make alive, that this man is sent to me to be cured of his leprosy? Peter was no "god, to kill or make alive," yet he entered the lonely chamber; walked up to the pale, dead body; knelt by its side; looked on the fixed and filmy eyes; took the cold hand of Dorcas into his own, and saying, "Dainsel, arise!" repeated the miracle of Bethany. Was such power imparted by God to a human voice? then why should I, who am called to speak to dead souls, have less faith than another man, as weak, as fallible, as mortal, who is called to speak to a dead body? God can give you life though you were dead—dead as a grinning skull. Therefore I preach in the name of him whose heart is love, and whose word is life; who saith, and it is done; who commandeth, and it standeth fast. "Repent," therefore, "and be converted, every one of you." Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Awake, thou that sleepest, and call on thy God! Awake to salvation; time is pressing. Awake to prayer; the door is shutting. Awake to work; the night is falling. Awake to flee; the treacherous tide is creeping round and round you. Awake to believe! who does not, is damned; who does, is saved.

II. Consider what is implied in this question, which every true Christian will be ready to repeat—Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

1. It implies that every true convert submits himself to the will of Christ. It is not, What will my minister or elders, my parents or

family, my neighbors or friends, the wife of my bosom, or children of my heart—but what wilt *thou* have me to do? This submission to another's will is the most difficult of things. It is easier, indeed, to bend iron, when it is cold, than a stubborn will; and I will bring you a thousand people in the world who will sooner give up their money than their will to others. Does not every parent in imparting to his child what is the best part of its education, find that to be the most difficult thing he has to do? I say the best part of education. That is not learned at schools, nor found in books; it does not lie in Latin, Greek, or philosophy; it is not communicated by teachers. The boy gets it, or should get it, at home. The best teacher is the parent; and the best lesson he can impart to his children—the best learning he can give them, something far better than the largest fortune, is to take them, one by one, and break the backbone of their self-will. That lies at the foundation of a well-doing family, and makes a happy home; for as one God makes a harmonious universe, so one ruler makes a happy house.

Happy are the children who have early learned the self-denial that, saying No, turns a deaf ear to the syren's song; withdraws its eyes from viewing vanity; and putting its foot on temptation, crushes out the spark. This is to command fortune, and secure success in life. And happy are the children that, early trained in this virtue, have learned to say to a wise, good, Christian father, what Jesus said to his—"Father, not my will, but thine be done." This submission to the will of another, the first, best lesson, the battle of the nursery, trains us for the battle of the world, and also the Church. And thus are we to yield our wills to Christ, not saying what would I wish, this one will, or that one say, but What wilt *thou* have me to do? Say, and I'll do it, though I should die for it. Give the word. Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.—In the church, in the place of business, in the family, in the world, What wilt thou have me to do? Henceforth, my will be dead. May I have none but thine!

There is a memorable passage in the history of St. Francis that may throw light on this subject. The grand rule of the order which he founded, was implicit submission to the superior. Well, one day a monk proved refractory. He must be subdued. By order of St. Francis, a grave was dug deep enough to hold a man; the monk was put into it; the brothers began to shovel in the earth; while their superior, standing by, looked on, stern as death. When the mould had reached the wretch's knees, St. Francis bent down, and, fixing his eye on him, said, Are you dead yet—is your self-will dead—do you yield? There was no answer; down in the grave there seemed to stand a man with a will as iron as his own. The signal was given, and the burial went on. When at length he was buried up to the middle, to the neck, to the lips, St. Francis bent down once more to repeat the question, Are you

dead yet? The monk lifted his eye to his superior to see in the cold, grey eyes that were fixed on him no spark of human feeling. Dead to pity, and all the weaknesses of humanity, St. Francis stood ready to give the signal that should finish the burial. It was not needed; the iron bent; he was vanquished; the funeral was stopped; his will yielding to a stronger, the poor brother said, "I am dead."

It has been said that Popery is not so much a contradiction as a denial of the truth; or a caricature of it. It is true. I would not be dead as these monks to any man. The mind and reason which I have got from God Almighty are to bend implicitly and blindly before no human authority. But the submission I refuse to man, Jesus, I give to thee—not wrung from me by terror, but won by love; the result not of fear, but of gratitude. I wish to be dead, not as that monk, but as he who said, I am dead; "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live." Saul, the persecuter, was dead; but Paul, the great Apostle, lived. Yet not I, he adds, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Were it so with us, had we no will of our own, what happy, good, brave, devoted Christians we should be! I have seen a servant come in the morning to his master for orders, and leave to spend the day in executing them; and would every man and woman in this house go morning by morning to Christ, saying, with Saul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do this day? there would be no difficulty in getting any amount of money for Christ's cause; any number of people to do his work, or to make the utmost sacrifices for his cause. Stewards, however thrifty and niggard of their own, do not grudge to pay away their master's money; and if I, and you, looked on our gold and silver as Christ's we should never hesitate to part with it for him. I have heard the plough boy whistling in the furrow, and the milk-maid singing at her pail; and, happy as the larks that fill the blue skies above them with their ringing carols, they never fretted because they had to spend the live-long day in their master's service: nor would we to spend the day, the night, years, our lives, for Christ, did we but feel ourselves to be his servants.

I have read with admiration how a troop of cavalry, dashing at the roaring cannon, would rush on to death; and how the forlorn-hope would throw them selves, with a bound and a cheer, into the fiery breach, knowing that should they leave their bodies there—it was the will of their commander. Shall they do that, obedient, amid the shell and shot of battle, to the will of an earthly leader; and shall Christians do less for Christ? Are you your own? body or soul, your own? is anything you call yours, your own? We have one Master in heaven; and if it be true that he bought us with his blood; bought us with his tears; bought us with his thorny crown; bought us with the agonies of

Calvary—in the name of God, and truth, and heaven, what right has a Christian to himself? What Christian man or woman should not be ready to say, with this blessed, happy convert—I have done with myself; I no longer live: Jesus, I have no will but thine! Lord, say what am I to do, and I will do it; and, taking up my cross, follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God; nought but death—nay, thanks be to God, not death—nothing henceforth shall part me and thee.

2. This question implies that every true convert feels his individual responsibility. It is not only, Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do? but reading the question otherwise, Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?

In looking over some vast assembly, with its sea of human faces, one reflection naturally suggests itself—in a few years they shall be all mouldering in the dust. There is another and yet more solemn thought: our minds are carried forward to that day when the graves of a thousand generations, having given up their dead, all eyes, instead of being turned on a poor mortal man, shall, some beaming with joy and others black with despair, be fixed on the great white throne, and him that sits crowned thereon. But there is a third thought that presses on me whenever I cast my eyes over some such great assembly, and see all these human faces; it is this—What power is here! What an immense moral power!

You may smile at him who stood by the cataract of Niagara as, gathering her waters from a hundred lakes, she rolled them over with the roar of a hundred thunders; and who, instead of being filled with a sublime admiration of the scene, began to calculate how much machinery that water-power would turn. You may smile at that utilitarianism. But it is a serious, solemn, stirring thought to think how much moral machinery all this power now before me could turn for good, were every scheming brain, and busy hand, and willing heart, engaged in the service of God. I hope many of you are active, zealous Christians. But were all of us so—were all Christian men and women so, what honor would accrue to God! what a revenue of glory to Jesus Christ, and what invaluable service to religion! Thousands on thousands might be saved!

It is impossible to over-estimate, or rather to estimate the power that lies latent in our churches. We talk of the power latent in steam—latent till Watt evoked its spirit from the waters, and set the giant to turn iron arms of the machinery. We talk of the power that was latent in the skies till science climbed their heights, and, seizing the spirit of the thunder, chained it to our surface—abolishing distance; out-stripping the wings of time; and flashing our thoughts across rolling seas to distant continents. Yet what are these to the moral power that

lies asleep in the congregations of our country, and of the Christian world? And why latent? Because men and women neither appreciate their individual influence, nor estimate aright their own individual responsibilities. They cannot do everything; therefore, they do nothing. They cannot blaze like a star; and, therefore, they won't shine like a glow-worm; and so they are content that the few work, and that the many look on. Not thus are the woods clothed in green, but by every little leaf expanding its own form. Nor thus that fields are covered with golden corn, but by every stalk of grain ripening its own head. Nor thus does the coral reef rise from the depths of ocean, but by every little insect building its own rocky cell.

You say, what can I do? oh, I have no power, nor influence, nor name, nor talents, nor money! Look at the coral reef, yonder, where it encircles the fair isles that lie like bright gems on the bosom of the Pacific; or, by Australian shores, stretches its unbroken wall for a thousand leagues along the sea. How contemptible the architects; yet the aggregate of their labours, mocking our greatest breakwaters, how colossal! So it ought to be, and would be, in our congregations, were every man and every woman to feel their own individual responsibilities; would each go to Christ, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?—would they but rise to the height of their calling. I know that all cannot be bright and burning lights; that honour is reserved for John Baptist and a few such men. But see how that candle in a cottage window sends out its rays streaming, far through the depths of night. Why should not we shine, though but like that?—shine, though it should be to illumine only the narrow walls of our country's humblest home.

Consider how the greatest things ever done on earth, have been done by little and little—little agents, little persons, and little things. How was the wall restored around Jerusalem? By each man, whether his house was an old palace or the rudest cabin, building the breach before his own door. How was the soil of the New World redeemed from gloomy forests? By each sturdy emigrant cultivating the patch round his own log cabin. How have the greatest battles been won? Not by the generals, who got their breasts blazoned with stars, and their brows crowned with honours; but by the rank and file—every man holding his own post, and ready to die on the battlefield. They won the victory! It was achieved by the blood and courage of the many; and I say, if the world is ever to be conquered for our Lord, it is not by ministers, nor by office-bearers, nor by the great, the noble, and mighty; but by every man and woman, every member of Christ's body, being a working member; doing their own work; filling their own sphere; holding their own post; and saying to Jesus, Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do? And, indeed, when all is done, I venture to say of the busiest man that, when he lies on a dying bed, and grim

death stands over him, his won't be the pleasant reflection, How much have I done? but rather the regretful thought, How much have I left undone? how many more sinners might I have warned; how many more wretched might I have blessed; how many more naked might I have clothed; how many more poor might I have fed; how many in hell may be cursing my want of faithfulness; how few in heaven are blessing God for my Christian, kind fidelity! Ah, the best of us will be thankful to be taken to glory, not as profitable servants, but as sinners saved.

3. It implies that the life of the true convert will be one of deeds.

It is not only, Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do; and Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do; but this also, Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do*? to do; not, observe and mark, to believe or to profess, but to *do*.

I do not stand here to set deeds against doctrines, or to exalt the one at the expense of the other. Nor have I any sympathy with the fashion, so common now-a-days, of setting small value on creeds; saying, It matters little what a man believes, if he does right. A man cannot do right unless he believes right. The thing is impossible, and as contrary to true philosophy as religion, since every effect must have a cause, and every stream a spring; nor can water rise above its fountain, and according to the character of the fountain, so will be that of the water it discharges. I know as well as others that doctrines are not deeds; that dogmas are not lives; that the foundation is not the superstructure. Yet that night when the rains descend, and the floods rise, and the winds blow, happy is the man whose storm-beaten house stands founded on a rock; he may go to bed amid the wild uproar of elements, and sleep in peace; and happy, happier still, the man, when the hour comes which shall sweep away all confidence in human merits, whose hopes of salvation stand on the Rock of Ages, secure on the work and death of Christ.

Calls creeds, as some do, mere skeletons; and doctrines and dogmas but the bones, and not the living, lovely, breathing form of true religion. Still I turn round to ask, What were the body without the bones? are not these an essential part of the animal system; maintaining our form erect, imparting to it its symmetry, giving these feet their power to walk, these hands their power to work? Not less important the place that doctrines hold, the part they play; and therefore I say, hold fast the profession of your faith; stand fast in the truth; be steadfast, immovable, valiant for the truth; be charitable and courteous, yet earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Still faith without works is dead; dead, in the judgment of an apostle; worse than dead, an offence; a cause of disgust like a dead body, stinking in the nostrils of the church and even of the world. Of what use is faith without works: doctrine without deeds? Of no

more use than trees without fruit, or clouds without water. Useless the creeds that do not influence our conduct; the preaching that leads to no practice; the Sabbath that impart no impulse heavenward which extends along the running week, nor by the rest of the seventh day brace us up for the toils of the six. Prayer meetings, sermons, religious services, are good; but they are not, as some make them, banquets where you are to enjoy yourselves and gratify your taste—like a man who sits down at a sumptuous feast to please his palate, and fill his belly. This is not to use but to abuse them.

Would you see their proper use? Look at yon hardy and sun-burned man, sitting down in his cottage to a simple meal; and rising from the table to spend the strength it gives him at the plough, the spade, the labours of the field. So Sabbaths with their sermons, week-days with their occasional religious services, are to strengthen us for work—otherwise our religion is no less selfish than the lives of thousands, gourmands and epicures, who eat and drink for no higher purpose than their own pleasure. Our object should be to get strength to do God's work in this world; and to follow, at however great a distance, the steps of Him who, as our pattern as well as propitiation, went about continually doing good. I am sure that Christ is the propitiation of none of whom he is not also the pattern; and that on the last great day you shall never be asked what church you attended? to what denomination you belonged? what was your confession or creed? No! It is fruit, not leaves nor even flowers, that is the test of the tree. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.

Alive to this, what good we should do! how busy we should be! There would be no time for sin; little even for rest. Rest? We have often thought we should like a time of rest, ere leaving this busy world—a quiet corner, in the decline of life, like the straw or twig that, after being tossed about in the roaring torrent, floats aside into a smooth and placid pool, to sail round and round in seeming, serene enjoyment. But rest! what have we to do with that? From his cradle to the grave, did Christ ever rest? Does God ever rest? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said our Lord. If you must have rest, wait a little while: your weary body will find it in the grave, and your spirit in yon blessed skies. Earth for work, heaven for wages—this life for the battle, another for the crown—time for employment, eternity for enjoyment. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Rise then to the duties and dignity of your Christian calling! Let every man and woman, I and you, the humblest of you, feel that they have a mission, a great mission on earth. Till then let us work at our mission; seeking to make this wretched world better than we found it, and, in good and holy works, to leave our "footprints on the sands of time."

Are you saved yourself? seated above the boiling sea, safe on the Rock of Ages? Then reach down your hand to pull up this, and that other drowning wretch. I would rather see a man, with eager eye and outstretched arm, bending down to draw others up on the rock, than see him on his knees thanking God for his own escape and safety—the one were more God's work than the other. Christian men and women! the misery of this world, the sorrows you can heal, the wretchedness you can relieve, the habits you can improve, the wrongs you can redress, the happiness you can bestow, the souls you can save, call you to work.

And what the love of Christ requires, and the Bible enjoins, its revelations of the future encourage us to do. Grand prophecies wait fulfilment. The world's best days are yet to come. Whether we help it on or not, the time approaches when eager crowds shall throng the gates of mercy, and sinners shall flee to their Saviour like doves to their windows—and not politically only but spiritually, nations shall be born in a day—and converts be numerous in this island, and over all the world, as the dew that from the womb of the morning top every spike of grass, and hang, like pendant diamonds, sparkling on every branch.

Lend your prayers, your money, your time, your help in every form to that glorious cause. Go, work: work for the God that loved you; work for the Saviour that bled for you; work for the world that, sinking, appeals to you for help—your motto “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

MAN'S GREAT DUTY

“Lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:12).

ON THE DECK of a foundering vessel stood a Negro slave – the last man on board, he was about to step into the life-boat at her last trip. She was already loaded almost to the gunwale; to the water edge. Observed to bear in his arms what seemed a heavy bundle, the boat's crew, who had difficulty to keep her afloat in such a roaring sea, refused to receive him unless he came unencumbered, and alone. He pressed to his bosom what he carried in his arms, and seemed loth to part with it. They insisted. He had his choice – either to leap in and leave that behind him, or throw it in and stay to perish. He opened its folds; and there, warmly wrapt round, lay two children whom their father, his master, had committed to his care. He kissed them; bade the sailors carry his affectionate farewell to his master, and tell how he had faithfully fulfilled his charge; and then, lowering the children into the boat which pushed off, the dark man stood alone on the sinking deck – and bravely went down with the foundering ship. Such arms slavery binds; such kind hearts it crushes! A noble and touching example that of the love that seeketh not her own! yet it shews how the means of salvation may be inadequate to the occasion. So no poor sinner need perish, nor lose eternal life. There is room for all in Christ. Our cry to the perishing, Come to Jesus, Come; “yet there is room.”

While there is eternal life in the gospel sufficient for all, none are specially excluded from its benefits. Those only are excluded who exclude themselves, and refuse to be saved on God's own terms. His proclamation of mercy to a lost, rebel world, is clogged with no exceptions. After our brave men had crushed that terrible revolt which some years ago shook our Indian Empire to its foundations, and filled many of our homes with grief, an amnesty was proclaimed, but not to all. Some were by name excluded from its grace; and, as might have been expected, these desperate men fought it out to the last in the fastnesses and deadly jungles of Nepaul. They did not come in to accept the amnesty. There was no reason why they should. It was not for them. Heads of the revolt, and guilty of cold-blooded murders, as well as of the blackest treachery, there was no hope of mercy held out to them; and so, standing to their arms, they resolved to spin out their lives to the last thread, and sell them at the dearest price.

What a contrast to this, the gospel! Whatever be men's sins and crimes, none are excluded, by name or by character, from the amnesty

which God proclaims, from the benefits of eternal life, "Whosoever cometh unto me," says Jesus, "I will in nowise cast out"; on no account; for no crimes—no depth of guilt—no length of resistance to my gracious offers; let him come with all the sins on his head which any man ever committed or it is possible for man to commit; let him come in life's last worthless hour, I will not turn away from him—from the vilest, hoariest sinner; I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked—nor am I willing that any should perish, but that all should come to me and live. Thus, though the words of my test are addressed to a man of God, they admit of a wider than their first application; and, therefore, to those that are not, as well as to those that are, men of God, in his great name we address this call, Lay hold on eternal life. There is enough of it to supply the wants of all. No child of Adam stands excluded from its precious blessings.

I. Consider our need of eternal life.

Greatest gift of God! eternal life is deliverance from eternal death, the curse of a broken law, and the doom of a burning hell. Eternal life is eternal blessedness—the pardon of sin's guilt, and freedom from its tyrannous power; the pleasures of a pure heart, and the enjoyment of peace with God; joy without any bitter admixture, and riches without wings; health that never sickens, life that never dies, and a glory hereafter that never fades away; perfect holiness in the likeness, and perfect happiness in the bosom of God. These are what we need; and how great is our need of them?

How great our need, was once well expressed by Rowland Hill. A preacher, who threw his whole soul into his work, he was challenged for the vehemence of his voice and manner. Unlike some whose dull, cold, unimpassioned manner in the pulpit, led an infidel to say that he doubted whether the preachers themselves believed in a hell, he spoke like a man who saw the people hang over perdition; and heard their long, piercing shrieks, as one after another they lost their hold, and dropped into the fiery gulf. Exception being taken, as I have said, to his energy and vehemence, Hill told how he had once seen a vast bank of earth, below which some men were at work, suddenly rend asunder; and leaving its bed, precipitate itself forward to bury them alive before they could utter a cry, or move a foot to escape. And who then, he asked, found fault with me, because, in my anxiety to save them, my cries for help were loud enough to call the neighborhood to the rescue, and be heard a long mile away. Left there, they perished, miserably perished—needing what God, not man, always is, "a very present help in trouble." The moral of the story is very plain. These poor men, buried below a mass of earth, gasping for air, choking for want of breath, in instant danger of perishing, did not stand in greater, nor so great, need of strong arms to dig them out, as all men do of eternal life.

Sin has brought death into this world; and we are all of us involved in the calamity—buried in the ruins of the fall. We may not have sinned as others have done; that is very possible. But in vain the Pharisee thanks God that he is “not as this publican”; in vain the self-righteous, shrinking from the touch of some low and loathsome outcast, says, Stand aside, I am holier than thou. Ah, pity rather than pride is the feeling with which the best men regard the worst; conscious, as they are, that they would have been no better than others, had they been left to themselves, and exposed to as great temptations! All by nature lying under the same sentence of condemnation, pride, which is not for angels, still less befits felons—those whose crimes have brought them to a common prison, and doomed them to a common death.

But, though we have sinned less than others, we cannot be saved by merit; even as, thank God, though we have sinned more than others, we may be saved by mercy. How idle to talk of other men being greater sinners than we are—to flatter and deceive ourselves with that! He drowns as surely who has his head beneath one inch of water, as he who, with a mill stone hung round his neck, has sunk a hundred fathoms down. Let the strain of the tempest come, and the ship that has one bad link in her cable, as certainly goes ashore to be dashed to pieces on the rocks, as another that has twenty bad. It is, no doubt, by repeated strokes of the woodman’s axe that the oak, bending slowly to fate, bows its proud head and falls to the ground, and it is by long dropping that water hollows the hardest stone. But those who speak of great and little, of few or many sins, seem to forget that man’s ruin was the work of one moment, and of one sin. The weight of only one sin sank this great world into perdition; and now all of us, all men, lie under the same sentence of condemnation. Extinguishing every hope of salvation through works, and sounding as ominous of evil in men’s ears as the cracking of ice beneath our feet, or the roar of an avalanche, or the grating of a keel on the sunken reef, or the hammer that wakens the felon from dreams of life and liberty, that sentence is this—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.”

Such is our position; and instead of shutting our eyes to it, like the foolish ostrich that hides her head in the bush when the hunters are at her heels, it is well to know and to face it. We are either lost or not lost. If not, by all means “sleep on and take your rest.” I should be sorry to disturb you. If the waves dance and play round your ship as she ploughs through a silver sea; if gentle zephyrs fill her sails; if no sound is heard but the song of the watch on deck, and the gentle dash of mimic billows as they break on your bows, lulling to slumber and happy dreams; then, happy voyagers, with a bright moon riding the calm heaven above, and wide sea-room below, “sleep on and take your

rest." But if, instead of this, a shock has come that makes your ship shiver from stem to stern, if hurrying feet tread the deck overhead, if signal guns are flashing and booming through the darkness, if the rattling cordage tells that they lower the boats, if men, pale with fear, rush into the cabin to cry, *We sink*; and if, when we leap from bed on the floor, the water, rushing through many a yawning seam, splashes on our naked feet, the time is not for sleep—but for instant action, and such cries as this, *O sirs, what shall I do to be saved!* Who can miss the application of this to our condition? With that curse of a broken law impending over us, in danger of perishing every moment so long as we are out of Christ, how should we cry, *Save me, I perish*; and give immediate heed to the call, that Christ, seeing our danger, rises from his throne in heaven to sound down, *Lay hold of eternal life*.

II. Consider how we obtain eternal life.

Nothing in one sense more difficult, yet in another easier—a wish, a word, a look, and it is ours! I have read the story of a captive who, immured in Austrian prison, with no tool but a nail in his bleeding hands wrought night by night for twelve weary months, to mine its solid walls. Agitated by alternate hopes and fears, he at length accomplished his task; and then, on a dark, blustering night, by means of a rope that he had twisted, he swung himself over the dizzy depth; and, reaching the ground, swam the moat, and was free! What will a man not do, and not dare, for dear life and sweet liberty! But for eternal life—for the precious liberty of the sons of God, you have no such time to wait; nor hardships to suffer; nor desperate risks to run. You have only to wish, and, as if struck by a magician's rod, the walls of your prison house open. You are free.

During long years of care, and fears, and harassing thought, how do many toil for wealth; to be rich! And how often do their efforts fail! and, even when they have succeeded, how have we seen fortune, in a fit of caprice, suddenly desert her favorite; and his riches take themselves wings and flee away! But now, at this very moment, far happier than any worshipper of Mammon, you may enrich yourselves with wealth such as the fairy wand of old story never gave its possessor—when, only waving it, the dust of the road changed into gold, and the fountain, in place of water, sent up a jet of precious stones; every liquid drop, as it leapt into the air and fell back into the marble cistern, turning into a diamond, or ruby, or pearl. Again, what tortures have I seen people patiently endure, through a long protracted illness, to regain in health heaven's best earthly boon? But you have only to join the crowd, like the woman of old, to press through the throng, and lay your eager, trembling finger on the dusty hem of a Saviour's robe, to possess a health that never sickens; and is proof alike against the sharpest arrows of disease, and the dart of death.

Again, see yonder, amid the smoke of battle and in the throat of the deadly breach, how an ambitious soldier, bleeding from many wounds, fights his way upward to win an earthly crown! wins it, but lives not to wear it. He is just seen on the top of the fire-girdled battlement; he has just time to wave his bloody sword; and ere his less fortunate comrades have time to envy him his honours, the mark of a foeman's rifle, he is struck through the heart; and, reeling back, falls headlong from the heights of fortune into the ditch below—dead as a stone. But you have no such risks to run; no such dangers to face. In the quiet house of God—there or anywhere else—now—at this moment—you have only to reach out the hand of faith, and it grasps the crown; a crown of glory that fadeth not away. One short step carried the thief, and may carry you, from eternal death to eternal life. So near at all times are we to heaven or to hell. What a solemn position!

Do you ask, What shall we do to inherit eternal life; to be saved? I reply with Paul, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; but reject him whom I offer, and you may be damned—lost this hour, and lost for ever. The gift of God, say the Scriptures, is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He purchased it for us by his sinless obedience, his sufferings, his atoning death. For that great end his infant head was pillowed on straw, and his dying head on thorns; for that great end, his lowly cradle was a manger, and his death-bed was a bloody cross; and what it cost him so much to buy, his Father is ready to bestow “without money and without price.” He gives it for the asking; nay, more, much more than that, rare thing in the experience of the poor and needy, he presses his bounty on our acceptance.

On these streets, I have seen the poor hanging on the steps of the rich, and refusing to be ordered away; to move pity, laying bare their sores; and holding out their skinny hands to implore men's charity. But whoever saw the rich following the poor, with a hand filled with gold; pressing money on their acceptance; stopping them; entreating, beseeching, imploring them to take it? Yet thus, to the amazement both of angels and devils, God does with you, in offering his Son; and through him, the gift of eternal life. The truth is, he knows how wretched our fate if we refuse his mercy. He has looked on the fire that never has been quenched; he has heard the wail of those that are for ever lost; and as a father over his poor prodigal, a mother over her fallen daughter, he yearns over you—crying Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die.

III. Consider more particularly what we have to do, to obtain eternal life.

Do! It is not to make ourselves worthy of it; nor to attempt to merit it; nor to wait till we are holy before we come to Christ. Salvation is

not of works, but of faith. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life—this is a faithful saying." We have nothing to do then, but to believe; to open the door and receive him into our hearts, who is knocking there. Jesus is ready to come in, as a king into his palace—followed by penitence, humility, goodness, meekness, temperance, hope, peace, joy, charity; a long, shining train of graces. It is only by the hand of faith that we can lay hold of Christ. Do you say, But I cannot believe! I reply, true! you cannot of yourself, for, No man, says Jesus, can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him. Still, if you ask faith of God, he will certainly give it; working it in you by the power of his Holy Spirit. For what argument is at once unanswerable, and so comfortable as Christ's. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Thus, by the aid of the Spirit, and through the exercise of faith, you are to lay hold on the Saviour; and laying hold on him, though it were in the hour of most imminent destruction, and in the very jaws of death, you lay hold of life—of eternal life.

In his voyage to the Polar Regions, Kane, when involved with his brave companions among broken ice fields, found himself placed between two mighty, moving bergs. Each a towering, floating mountain of ice, they rapidly approached to give battle—threatening to crush his ship between them, like an empty shell. The danger was imminent; destruction seemed inevitable. There was not a breath of wind to fill their sails; and their ship, as if herself paralyzed with terror, lay still on the water—waiting her doom. At that moment of terrible suspense, when no power of theirs could extricate them, or clear their way through the ice that choked the only path of escape, just then, a low, water-washed berg, set in motion by some strange current, came driving up from the southward. If they could follow in its wake, it might make a way for them through the floating ice; and they might yet be saved—plucked from the very jaws of destruction. Their despair was now turned into hope. It neared them; it is passing them. They seize the opportunity; and, God blessing the attempt, succeed in planting an anchor on its slope—holding on it by a whale line. "It was an anxious moment," says Dr. Kane, "our noble tow-horse hauled us bravely on; the spray dashing over his windward flanks, and his forehead ploughing up the lesser ice as in scorn." The two great ice mountains, whirling on their axes, and roaring, grinding through the sea, encroach on the ship as it advances; they draw nearer, and still nearer, to each other; the channel is now nar-

rowed to forty feet; another moment and their fate is sealed. With the promptitude of sailors, they fly to the rigging and brace the yards to clear the ice-walls. They pass clear—saved as by the skin of their teeth; and “never,” writes Dr. Kane, “did men acknowledge with more gratitude their merciful deliverance from a wretched death.” A striking story; and yet but an imperfect illustration of our salvation from eternal death, by laying hold on Christ. He comes from heavenward; a Saviour in our great peril, and hour of need. By your faith lay hold on him; by your hope cast anchor on him; and you are saved. Through the raging wrath of God; through the perils of temptation; through the closing jaws of death, he will open you a triumphant way; till, safe in heaven, with harp in hand, and more gratitude of heart than the rescued seamen, you “acknowledge your merciful deliverance” from a more than wretched, even from eternal death.

IV. Consider when we are to lay hold on eternal life.

When—but now? If the body is in great danger and means of safety and escape are offered, there is no occasion to press them on men; to cry, lay hold on life, or say, do it now. In such circumstances, how does a man improve each moment, and clutch at life? I only wish I saw people as eager to be saved from hell, as I once saw a man to be saved from drowning. It was at yonder ferry. Procrastination, the ruin of souls, was almost his death. The time was up; the bell was rung; the gangway withdrawn; the boat in motion; when, after too many delays, he came running along the pier, and, deaf to the cries of warning, took a bold and desperate spring to catch our bulwark. He caught it, but lost his hold; fell backwards; and went down instantly—engulphed in the roaring sea. Sucked out by the receding wave, he rose to the surface a good way off. And though it was a blessed sight to see his head emerge from the water, every eye was still anxiously fixed on him. He floated on his back, but could not swim; and therefore must soon perish. And he had perished; but that then one, bearing a life-buoy aloft in his hand, came rushing down the pier at the top of his speed. Anxiety was now wound up to the highest pitch. Shall he save him? He stops; and with the spray of the stormy sea flying in his face, takes aim; now he bends like a bow; and then, rising to the spring, with herculean arm he sends the life-buoy spinning through the air, away over the waves, to the drowning man. What a moment of suspense for him; for us—the on-lookers! Well thrown by man, and well directed by a watchful providence, it fell right over his sinking head. With what joy he caught it! How he laid hold of it! Never lover embraced lover with such eager, happy arms. I saw him holding on, pulled from a watery grave; and thought, Would God, that poor sinners, that every man ready to perish laid hold as eagerly of eternal life? I gave God thanks that he was saved! He might have been damned if he had been drowned. Besides, I rejoice to think how happy that

night his wife and children to have him safe at home; and how bright the home which held a living father, rather than a widow stunned with grief, and children weeping by a cold, livid corpse.

But would you now lay hold on Christ, all the angels in heaven would sing, and all the bells in heaven would ring as the glad tidings were told, and your Father cried, Prepare a mansion, make ready a crown! for this my son that was dead is alive again, that was lost is found.

Thus joy abounds in paradise
Among the hosts of heaven,
Soon as the sinner quits his sins,
Repents and is forgiven.

In the name of him who purchased it, and offers it, and urges you to accept of it, I intreat you to lay hold of eternal life. He promises it now—to-day; but not to-morrow. The angels hovered, on wings of astonishment, over a Saviour's lowly cradle, and around his bloody cross; may they not be as much astonished to see a man refuse a crown of glory as they were to see the Son of God wearing the crown of thorns? Oh, what would the damned, the devils give for the offer which you hesitate to accept of? Why destroy your souls? Why scorn the love of Jesus? Why provoke a loving and long-suffering God to say, My spirit shall not any longer strive with that man—his blood be on his own head—he is joined to his idols, let him alone.

Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.

Happy day this, indeed, were you to lay hold on eternal life now! His head lies on a downy pillow whose heart is at peace with God. Light, be it orphan's or widow's lot, that of poverty, or bereavement, or disappointment, is the heaviest cross, sweet the bitterest cup, and calm in life's stormiest hour, the soul of him who has his sins forgiven—having laid hold of eternal life. Accept it then so long as it is in your offer; seize it so long as it is in your reach. Scatter money in a crowd, how they scramble for it; offer bread to the starving, how greedily they seize it; throw a rope to the drowning, how he eagerly grasps it! With like eagerness and earnestness may the Spirit of God help you to lay hold on Christ; and, having got hold of him, to hold on—till, amid a crowd of saints ready to receive you, are brought ashore, safely landed in the heavenly kingdom.

THE INHERITANCE

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

ONE THING is often set against another in the experience of the Christian; and also in the every-day procedure of the providence of God. So fared it with Jacob that night he slept in Bethel. A stone was his pillow, and the cold hard ground his bed; yet, while sleep sealed his eyelids, he had God himself to guard his low-laid head, and dreams such as seldom bless a couch of down. A ladder rose before him in the vision of the night. It rested on earth, and reached to the stars. And forming a highway for a multitude of angels, who ascended and descended in two dazzling streams of light it stood there the bright sign of a redemption which has restored the intercourse between earth and heaven, and opened a path for our return to God.

Now, the scheme of salvation, of which that ladder was a glorious emblem, may be traversed in either of these two ways. In studying it, we may descend by the steps that lead from the cause to the consummation, or, taking the opposite course, we may rise from the consummation to the cause. So—as a matter sometimes of taste, sometimes of judgment—men do in other departments of study.

The geographer for example, may follow a river from the lone mountaintops where its waters spring, down into the glen, into which, eager to leave sterility behind, it leaps with a joyous bound; and from thence, after resting awhile in black, deep, swirling pool, resumes its way, here spreading itself out in glassy lake, or there winding like a silver serpent through flowery meadows; until forcing a passage through some rocky gorge, it sweeps out into the plain, to pursue, 'mid shady woods and by lordly tower, through corn-fields, by smiling villages and busy towns, a course that, like the life of man, grows calmer as it nears its end. Or, starting from the sea-beach, he may trace the river upwards; till, passing town and church, tower and mill, scattered hamlet and solitary shepherd's cot, in some mossy well, where the wild deer drink, or mountain rock beneath the eagle's nest, he finds the place of its birth. The botanist, too, who describes a tree, may begin with its fruit; and from this, whether husky shell, or rugged cone, or clustering berry, he may pass to the flower; from that to the buds; from those to the branches; from the branches to the stem; and from the stem into the ground, where he lays bare the wide-spread roots, on which—as states depend upon the humbler classes for power, wealth, and worth—the tree depends both for nourishment and sup-

port. Or, reversing the plan, with equal justice to his subject, and advantage to his pupils, he may begin at the root and end with the fruit.

The inspired writers, in setting forth salvation, adopt sometimes the one course, and sometimes the other. With Paul, for instance, the subject of heaven now introduces Christ, and now from Christ, the Apostle turns to expatiate on the joys of heaven. Here, as on an angel's wing that sheds light on every step, we see him ascending, and there descending the ladder. Taking flight from the cross, he soars upward to the crown; and now, like an eagle sweeping down from the bosom of a golden cloud, he leaves the throne of the Redeemer to alight on the heights of Calvary. As an example of the ascending method, we have that well-known passage in his epistle to the Romans—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren: moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." There we pass from the root to the fruit, from the cause, step by step, to its effects; here again, Paul guides us upward along the stream of blessings to their perennial fountain. He first shows the precious gift, and then reveals the gracious giver; the purchase first, and afterwards the divine Purchaser. From the crown of glory, flashing on the brow of a Magdalene, he turns our dazzled eyes to another crown, a trophy hung upon a cross; a wreath of thorns, armed with long sharp spikes—each, in place of a pearly gem, tipped with a drop of blood. He first introduces us to heaven as our inalienable heritage, and then to the throne and person of him who won heaven for us. He conducts us up to Jesus, that we may fall at his feet with adoring gratitude, and join in spirit the saintly throng who dwell in the full fruition of his presence, and praise him throughout eternity.

The words of my text, and those also of the verse which follows it, are introductory to a sublime description of Jesus Christ—a picture to which, after considering these preliminary verses, we intend to draw your attention. To the eye both of saints and sinners it presents a noble subject. If his great forerunner felt himself unworthy even to loose the latchet of his shoes, how unworthy are these hands to sustain a theme so sacred and sublime. May he who ordaineth strength "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," without whose aid the strongest are weak, and by whose help the weakest are strong, fulfil among us his own great and gracious promise—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!"

Turning your attention, meanwhile, to the matter of these introductory verses, I remark—

I. Heaven is an inheritance.

Examples, at once of pride and poverty—how prone are men to attach importance to their own works, and to seek at least some shining points of goodness in them—like grains of gold in a mass of

rock! We are loth to believe that those things for which others esteem and love, and praise us, and even, perhaps, crown our brows with laurel, apart from Christ, have no merit; but appear in the sight of the holy and heart-searching God as, to use a Bible phrase, "filthy rags." It is not easy to bring human pride, no, nor human reason, to admit that; to believe that the loveliest, the purest, the most virtuous of womankind, a mother's pride and a household's honor, must be saved, as the vilest outcast is saved—as a brand plucked out of the fire, or he of whom God said, "Take away the filthy garments from him. Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

These feelings arise in part, perhaps, from a secret suspicion, that, if our works be entirely destitute of merit, they must at the same time disincumbent God to save us, and disqualify us for being saved. But how base, unscriptural, God-dishonoring is this fear! One would think that the parable of the prodigal had been invented to refute it. There, recognizing him from afar, God, under the emblem of an earthly father, runs to embrace his son, all foul and ragged as he is; he holds him in his arms; he drowns his confession in this great cry of joy, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Nature herself proves it false by every little child who lifts its hands and prayer to God as "Our Father which art in heaven." What idea has he formed of God who expects less of him than he would expect of any earthly mother? Let her be a queen. She is a mother; and under the impulse of feelings that reign alike in palaces and in cottages, how would that woman spring from her throne to embrace a lost babe; and, weeping tears of joy, press it to her jewelled bosom, though plucked from the foulest ditch, and wrapped in tainted rags? He knows little of human nature, fallen as it is, who fancies any mother turning from the plaintive cry and imploring arms of her offspring because, forsooth, it was restored to her in loathsome attire. And he is still more ignorant of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" who fancies that, unless man can make out some merit, he will receive no mercy. Blessed be his name, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Volumes of theology have been written, and long controversies have waxed hot, about the question—whether heaven is, or is not, in part, the reward of our own good works? Now it appears to me that there is one word in my text, whose voice authoritatively and summarily settles that matter; and would have always settled it, had not men's hearts been fired with angry passions, and their ears confused with the din of battle. That word is—*inheritance*. What is inheritance? The pay of a soldier is not inheritance; neither are the fees of a lawyer or of

a physician; nor the gains of trade; nor the wages of labor. Rewards of toil or skill, these are earned by the hands that receive them. What is inherited, on the other hand, may be the property of a new-born babe; and so you may see the coronet, which was won by the stout arm of valor, and first blazoned on a battered shield, standing above the cradle of a wailing infant. True, the ample estate, the noble rank, the hereditary honors were won. But they that won them are long dead; "their swords are rust, their bodies dust"; and underneath tattered banners, once borne before them in bloody fight, but now hung high in the house of God, the grim old barons sleep in their marble tombs. The rewards of their prowess and patriotism have descended to their successors; who, holding these, enjoy honors and estates, which we do not grudge them, but which their wealth never bought, and their courage never won.

Thus the saints hold heaven. In the terms of a court of law, it is theirs, not by conquest, but by heritage. Won by another arm than theirs, it presents the strongest imaginable contrast to the spectacle seen in England's palace that day when the king demanded to know of his assembled nobles, by what title they held their lands? "What title?" At the rash question a hundred swords leapt from their scabbards. Advancing on the alarmed monarch—"By these," they replied, "we won, and by these we will keep them." How different the scene which heaven presents! All eyes are fixed on Jesus; every look is love; gratitude glows in every bosom, and swells in every song; now with golden harps they sound the Saviour's praise; and now, descending from their thrones to do him homage, they cast their crowns in one glittering heap at the feet which were nailed on Calvary. Look there, and learn in whose name to seek salvation, and through whose merits to hope for it. For the faith of earth is just a reflection of the fervors of heaven; this the language of both—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

II. Heaven is a heritage of free grace.

We have no such legal claim to heavenly glory as may be established to some earthly inheritance. In consequence of a distant relationship, in those sudden turns of the wheel of fortune, which—displaying the providence of Him who abases the proud and exalts the humble—throw one family into the dust, and another into the possession of unexpected riches, the heir of noble titles and broad lands has started up from the deepest obscurity. And so I have seen a man come into a court of law, and, producing some old moth-eaten Bible, with its time-worn record of births, and marriages, and deaths, all long ago forgotten, or some damp, musty parchment, or some inscription copied from a burialstone, which the dispute has redeemed from decay and rank church-yard weeds, lay a firm hand on estates and honors won long centuries ago. Such strange events have happened. Heirs

have entered on the property of those between whom and them there existed no acquaintanceship, nor friendship, nor fellowship; for whom, in fact, they entertained no regard while they lived, and whose memory they neither cherish in warm hearts, nor preserve in cold brass or marble. But it is by no such obscure connection or remote relationship, that "the inheritance of the saints in light" becomes ours. We are constituted its heirs by virtue of sonship; we, who were once afar off—the seed of the serpent, the children of the devil, the children of wrath even as others—becoming sons by that act of grace, which has led many to exclaim with John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Thus heaven, presenting itself to us in one of its most engaging aspects, is not only an inheritance, but a home. Oh! how sweet that word! What beautiful and tender associations cluster thick around it! Compared with it, house, mansion, palace, are cold heartless terms. But home! that word quickens the pulse, warms the heart, stirs the soul to its depths, makes age feel young again, rouses apathy into energy, sustains the sailor on his midnight watch, inspires the soldier with courage on the field of battle, and imparts patient endurance to the worn-down sons of toil! The thought of it has proved a sevenfold shield to virtue; the very name of it has been a spell to call back the wanderer from the paths of vice; and, far away, where myrtles bloom and palm trees wave, and the ocean sleeps upon coral strands, to the exile's fond fancy it clothes the naked rock or stormy shore, or barren moor, or wild Highland mountain, with charms he weeps to think of, and longs once more to see. Grace sanctifies these lovely affections, and imparts a sacredness to the homes of earth by making them types of heaven. As a home the believer delights to think of it. Thus when, lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing our sorrow to see him laid so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one who had just left heaven, than of one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "*I am going home.*" Happy the family of which God is the father, Jesus the elder brother, and all the "saints in light" are brethren—brethren born of one Spirit; nursed at the full breast of the same promises; trained in the same high school of heavenly discipline; seated at the same table; and gathered all where the innocent loves of earth are not quenched, but purified; not destroyed, but refined! To that family circle every accession forms a subject of gratitude and praise; and every new-comer receives such welcome as a mother, while she falls on his manly breast, gives her son, or as sisters, locked in his arms, with theirs entwined around him, give the brother whom they have got safe back from wreck and storm, or the bloody fields of war.

So when, on returning home after weary journeys and a tedious absence, we have found that the whole household was moved, and

that all, down even to the tottering babe, with outstretched hands, and beaming faces, and joyful welcomes, were at the door to meet us, we have thought, it shall be thus at the gates of glory. What a meeting there of parents and children, brothers and sisters, and death-divided friends! What mutual gratulations! What overflowing joy! And, when they have led our spirit up through the long line of loving angels to the throne, what happiness to see Jesus, and get our warmest welcome from the lips of him who redeemed us by his blood, and, in the agonies of his cross, suffered for us more than a mother's pangs—"the travail of his soul."

Heir of grace! thy estate lies there. Child of God! thy Father, and Saviour, and brethren, and sisters, are there. Pilgrim to Sion, be ever pressing on and ever looking up! thy true home is there; a home above these blue skies, above sun and stars; a sweet, saintly, glorious home—whose rest shall be all the sweeter for the pelting of the storm, thy rugged path, the sorrows and the tears of earth—and whose light shall be all the brighter for that "valley of the shadow of death," from which thou shalt pass into the blaze of everlasting day. Believer! I congratulate thee on thy prospects. Lift up thy cast-down head; let thy port, man, be worthy of thy coming fortunes. Bear thyself as one who shall wear a holy crown; as one who, however humble thy present lot, is training for the highest society. Cultivate the temper, and acquire the manners, and learn the language of heaven; nor let the wealth or poverty, the joys or sorrows, the shame or honors of thy earthly state, ever make thee forget "the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

III. The heirs of heaven require to be made meet for the inheritance.

I knew a man who had amassed great wealth, but had no children to inherit it. He lost the opportunity, which one would think good men would more frequently embrace, of leaving Christ his heir, and bequeathing to the cause of religion what he could not carry away. Smitten, however, with the vain and strange propensity to found a house, or make a family, as it is called, he left his riches to a distant relative. His successor found himself suddenly raised from poverty to affluence, and thrown into a position which he had not been trained to fill. He was cast into the society of those to whose tastes, and habits, and accomplishments he was an utter and an awkward stranger.

Did many envy this child of fortune? They might have spared their envy. Left in his original obscurity he had been a happy peasant, whistling his way home from the plough to a thatch-roofed cottage, or on winter nights, and around the blazing faggots, laughing loud and merry among unpolished boors. Child of misfortune! he buried his happiness in the grave of his benefactor. Neither qualified by nature, nor fitted by education, for his position, he was separated from his

old, only to be despised by his new associates. And how bitterly was he disappointed to find, that, in exchanging poverty for opulence, daily toil for luxurious indolence, humble friends for more distinguished companions, a hard bed for one of down, this turn in his fortunes had flung him on a couch, not of roses, but of thorns! In his case, the hopes of the living and the intentions of the dead were alike frustrated. The prize had proved a blank; a necessary result of this fatal oversight, that the heir had not been made meet for the inheritance.

Is such training needful for an earthly estate? How much more for the "inheritance of the saints in light!" "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." No change to a condition however lofty—no elevation from the lowest obscurity to the highest honor, from abject poverty to the greatest affluence, adequately represents the difference between the state of sin in which grace finds us, and the state of glory to which it raises us. The most ignorant and debased of our city outcasts, the most wretched and loathsome wanderer of these streets, is not so unfit to be received into the holy bosom of a Christian family, as you are, by nature, to be received into the kingdom of heaven. A sinner there were more out of place than a ragged beggar in a royal palace, where, all gazing at his appearance with astonishment, and shrinking back from his defiling touch, he rudely thrusts himself within the brilliant circle. Compared with the difference between a man, as grace finds him, and heaven gets him, how feeble are all earthly distinctions! They sink into nothing. So unheavenly, in truth, is our nature, that unless we were made meet for the inheritance, we were no honor to it, nor were it any happiness to us.

What, for instance, were the most tempting banquet, to one without appetite, sick, loathing the very sight and smell of food? To a man stone-deaf, what the boldest blast of trumpet, the roll of drums, stirring the soldier's soul to deeds of daring valor, or the finest music that ever fell on charmed ear, and seemed to bear the spirit on its waves of sound up to the gates of heaven? Or what, to one stone-blind, a scene to which beauty has lent its charms, and sublimity its grandeur—the valley clad in a many-colored robe of flowers, the gleaming lake, the flashing cascade, the foaming torrent, the dark-climbing forest, the brave trees that cling to the frowning crags, the rocky pinnacles, and, high over all, hoary winter looking down on summer from her throne on the Alps' untrodden snows? Just what heaven would be to man with his ruined nature, his low passions, and his dark guilty conscience. Incapable of appreciating its holy beauties, of enjoying its holy happiness, he would find nothing there to delight his senses. How he would wonder in what its pleasures lay; and, supposing him once there, were there a place of safety out of it, how he would long to be away, and keep his eye on the gate to watch its opening, and escape as from a doleful prison!

Such an inheritance were to such a man like the gift of a noble library to a plumed, painted savage. As, ignorant of letters, he stalked from hall to hall amid the wisdom of bygone ages, and rolled his restless eyes over the unappreciated treasures, how he would sigh to be back to his native forests, where he might sit among his tribe at the council-fire, or raise his war-whoop, or hunt down the deer!

People talk strangely of going to heaven when they die; but what gratification could it possibly afford a man whose enjoyments are of a sensuous or sensual nature—whose only pleasure lies in the acquisition of worldly objects, or the gratification of brutal appetites? You hope to go to heaven! I hope you will. But, unless your heart is sanctified and renewed, what were heaven to you? an abhorrent vacuum. The day that took you there would end all enjoyment, and throw you, a castaway, upon a solitude more lonely than a desert island. Neither angels nor saints would seek your company, nor would you seek theirs. Unable to join in their hallowed employments, to sympathize with, or even to understand their holy joys, you would feel more desolate in heaven than we have done in the heart of a great city, without one friend, jostled by crowds, but crowds who spoke a language we did not understand, and were aliens alike in dress and manners, in language, blood, and faith.

It is the curse of vice, that, where its desires outlive the power of gratification, or are denied the opportunity of indulgence, they become a punishment and a torment. Denied all opportunity of indulgence, what would a drunkard do in heaven? Or a glutton? Or a voluptuary? Or an ambitious man? Or a worldling? one whose soul lies buried in a heap of gold? Or she, who, neglecting quite as much the noble purposes of her being, flits, life through, a painted butterfly, from flower to flower of pleasure, and wastes the day of grace in the idolatry and adornment of a form which death shall change into utter loathsomeness, and the grave into a heap of dust? These would hear no sounds of ecstasy, would see no brightness, would smell no perfumes, in paradise. But, weeping and wringing their hands, they would wander up and down the golden streets to bewail their death, crying—“The days have come in which we have no pleasure in them.” On that eternal Sabbath—from which nor fields, nor news, nor business would afford escape—what would they do, who hear no music in church bells, and say of holy services, “When will they be over?” Oh, the slow, weary march of the hours of never-ending Sabbath devotions! Oh, the painful glare of a never-setting Sabbath sun! Than go down to hell, than perish in the coming storm, they would turn their prow to heaven; but only as the last refuge of a sinking bark—a safe, it may be, but yet a friendless shore. Unlike the happy swallows which David envied, thy altar, O God, is the very last spot where many would choose to build their nests!

Such is by nature the disposition of all of us. “The heart is desperately wicked.” “The carnal mind” has an aversion to spiritual

duties, and an utter distaste for spiritual enjoyments. Nor is that all the truth. However it may lie concealed, like a worm in the bud, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Illustrating the familiar adage, "out of sight, out of mind," this feeling may lie dormant so long as our enemy is unseen. But, let him appear, and his presence opens every old wound afresh, and fans the smoldering enmity into flame. Therefore, the heaven that purifies the saint would but exasperate the hatred of the sinner; and the more God's holiness and glory were revealed, the more would this enmity be developed—just as the thicker the dews fall on decaying timber, the faster the timber rots; and the more full the sunshine on a noxious plant, the more pestilent its juices grow. It is not in polar regions, where the day is night, and the showers are snow, and the rivers are moving ice, and slanting sunbeams fall faint and feeble, but in the climes where flowers are fairest, and fruits are sweetest, and fullest sunshine warms the air and lights a cloudless sky, that nature prepares her deadliest poisons. There the snake sounds its ominous rattle, and the venomous cobra lifts her hood. Even so sin, could it strike root in heaven, would grow more rankly, more hating and more hateful than on earth, and man would cast on God an eye of deeper and intenser enmity.

Hence the need of being made, by a change of heart, new creatures in Jesus Christ. Hence, also, the need, which by reason of indwelling and remaining corruption, even God's people daily feel, of getting, with a title to the heavenly inheritance, a greater meetness for it. In other words, you must be sanctified as well as saved. This work, so necessary, as we have seen, in the very nature of things, has been assigned to the Holy Spirit. It was the office of the Son to purchase heaven for the heirs. And it is the office of the Spirit to prepare the heirs for heaven. Thus renewed, purified and at length wholly sanctified, we shall carry a holy nature to a holy place, and be presented "faultless, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy." But observe, more particularly,

IV. As heaven is the gift of God, our meetness for it is the work of God.

In my text, the apostle calls for thanks unto the Father. For by whatever instruments God executes his work, whether the means he uses to sanctify his people be dead books, or living ministers, be sweet or severe, common or striking providences, the work is not theirs, but his. Owing him, then, no less praise for the Spirit who makes us meet for the inheritance, than for the Son who purchased it, we give thanks to God. The church weaves the three names into one doxology, singing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

Let me illustrate this point by a reference to the case of Lazarus. On the day when he was raised from the dead, Lazarus had two things to thank Christ for. His gratitude was due for what Jesus did without

human instrumentality, and also for what he did by it; both for the "Lazarus come forth!" that rent the grave, and for the "Loose him and let him go!" that rent the grave-clothes; not only for life, but for the liberty without which life had been a doubtful blessing. Doubtful blessing! What enjoyment had there been in life so long as the face-cloth was left on his eyes, and his limbs were bound fast in the ceremonies of the tomb? He emerges from the grave's black mouth a living, yet a startling, hideous object, from whose appalling form the crowd reels back, and terror-stricken sisters might be excused for shrinking. Shrouded like a corpse, smelling of the noisome grave, with the yellow linen muffling eyes and mouth, every door had been shut against him, and the streets of Bethany cleared of flying crowds by such a frightful apparition. Who would have sat beside him at the feast? Who would have worshiped with him in the synagogue? A public terror, shunned by his dearest friends, to him life had been no boon; but a burden—a heavy load from which he had sought relief, where many a weary one has found it, in the deep oblivion of the tomb. Had Christ done no more than bid Lazarus live, I can fancy his unhappy friend imploring him to resume the gift, saying, Take it back; let me return to the quiet grave; the dead will not shun me; and I shall say to corruption, "Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister."

In these circumstances, the conduct of our Lord illustrates that grace which, in whomsoever it begins a good work, will carry it on to the day of the Lord Jesus. Pointing to Lazarus—who was, perhaps, endeavoring at that moment, like a newly-awakened sinner, to fling off his shroud, and be free—he addresses the spectators, saying, "Loose him, and let him go!" And thus God deals with renewed souls. Liberty follows life. To His Holy Spirit, and, in a subordinate sense, to providence in its dealings, to ministers in the pulpit, to parents, teachers, and all other human instruments, he says, Undo the bonds of sin—loose them, and let them go!

Now, to bring the subject home, have we not merely fancied, but have we felt, have we solid scriptural ground for believing, that the same spirit-freeing words have been spoken of us? Have we been freed from habits that were to us as grave-clothes? And, emancipated from passions which once enslaved us, are we now, at least in some measure, doing what David undertook, when he said, "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart"? In growing holiness—in heavenly desires that, flame-like, shoot upward to the skies—in godly resolutions that aim at, if they do not always attain, a lofty mark—"in the lust of the flesh," and the "pride of life," nailed to a cross where, if not yet dead, they are dying daily—in holy sorrows that, like a summer cloud, while they discharge their burden in tears, are spanned by a bow of hope—in longings that aspire after a purer state and a better land—in these things have you at once the pledge of heaven and the meetness for it? If so, "this is the Lord's do-

ing; it is marvelous in our eyes." As delightful as marvelous! What joy, what peace should it impart to the hearts of those who, feeling themselves less than the least of God's mercies, unworthy of a crust of bread or of a cup of water, hail in these the bright tokens of a blood-bought crown—that coming event which casts its shadow before!

But if, without this meetness, you are indulging the hope that, when you die, you will succeed to the inheritance—ah! how shall the event, the dreadful reality, undeceive you! Ponder these words, I pray you, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord," "Without are dogs," "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Let no man delude himself; or believe that cunning devil, who—unlike the ugly toad that, seated squat by the ear of Eve, filled her troubled mind with horrid dreams—hovers over him in the form of a benignant angel, charming away his fears with "peace, peace, when there is no peace." Believe me, that the only proof that God has chosen us is, that we have chosen him. The distinguishing mark of heirs is some degree of meetness for the heirship. In saints, the spirit is willing even when the flesh is weak; the body lags behind the soul; the affections outrun the feet; and the desires of those who are bound for heaven, are often far on the road before themselves. By these signs thou mayest know thyself. Can you stand that touchstone?

Ere autumn has tinted the woodlands, or the cornfields are falling to the reaper's song, or hoary hill-tops, like gray hairs on an aged head, give warning of winter's approach, I have seen the swallow's brood pruning their feathers, and putting their long wings to the proof; and, though they might return to their nests in the window-eaves, or alight again on the house-tops, they darted away in the direction of sunny lands. Thus they showed that they were birds bound for a foreign clime, and that the period of their migration from the scene of their birth was nigh at hand. Grace also has its prognostics. They are infallible as those of nature. So, when the soul, filled with longings to be gone, is often darting away to glory, and, soaring upward, rises on the wings of faith, till this great world, from her sublime elevation, looks a little thing, God's people know that they have the earnest of the Spirit. These are the pledges of heaven—a sure sign that their "redemption draweth nigh." Such devout feelings afford the most blessed evidence that, with Christ by the helm, and "the wind," that "bloweth where it listeth," in our swelling sails, we are drawing nigh to the land that is afar off; even as the reeds, and leaves, and fruits that float upon the briny waves, as the birds of strange and gorgeous plumage that fly round his ship and alight upon its yards, as the sweet-scented odors which the wind wafts out to sea, assure the weary mariner that, ere long, he shall drop his anchor, and end his voyage in the desired haven.

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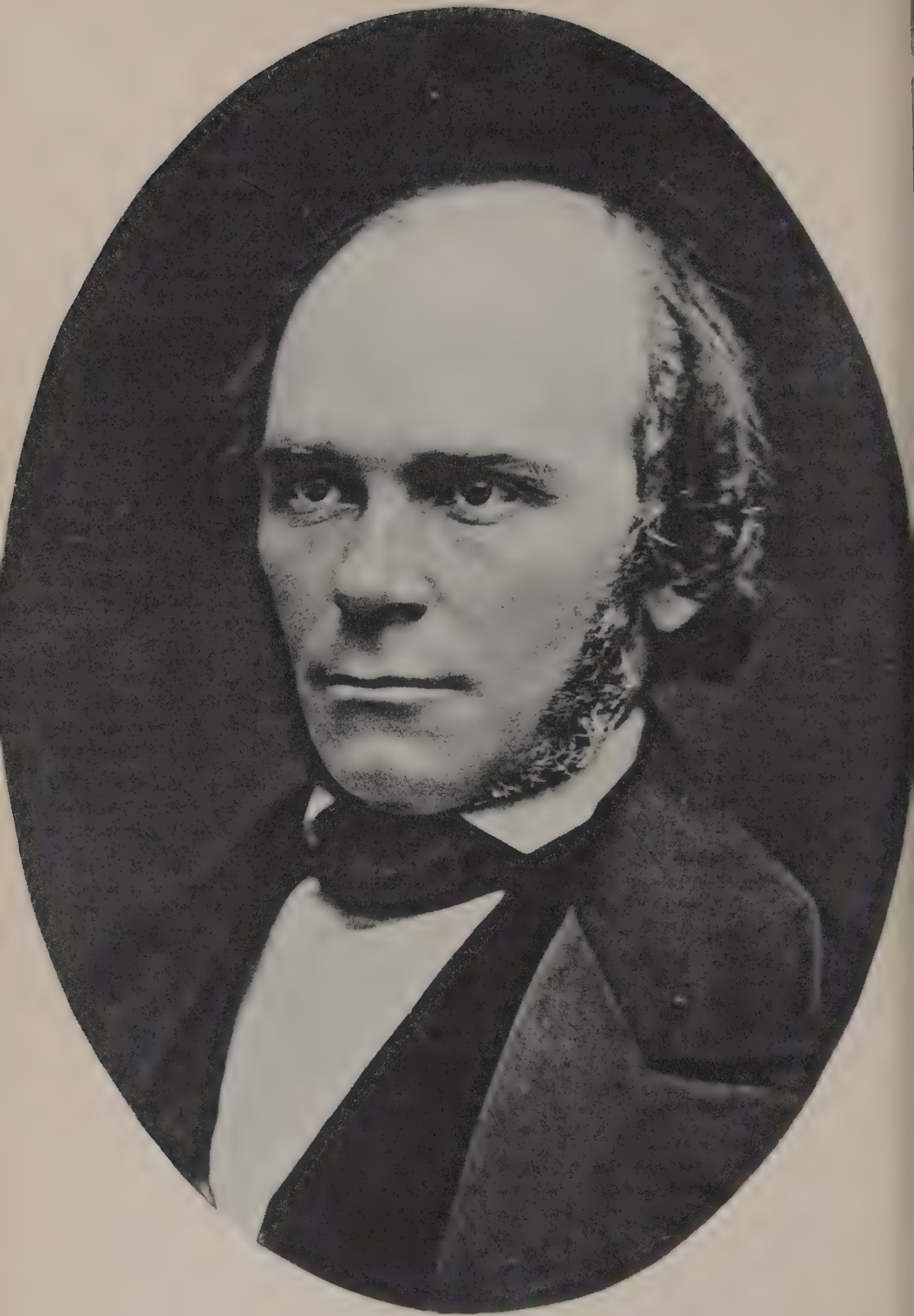
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THEODORE PARKER

1810 - 1860



THEODORE PARKER, from a heliotype reproduction from a daguerreotype portrait taken at the age of thirty-nine, from *Theodore Parker: A Biography* by Octavius Brooks Frothingham (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1876), frontispiece.

THEODORE PARKER

- 1810 *Born August 24, Lexington, Massachusetts*
- 1830 *Enrolled in Harvard*
- 1831 *Went to Boston to teach*
- 1832 *Entered Harvard Divinity School*
- 1836 *Graduated from Harvard*
- 1837 *Became pastor of the West Roxbury Unitarian Church*
- 1842 *Delivered lectures in Boston*
- 1843 *Called to a meeting of Boston ministers; toured Europe*
- 1844 *Preached the "Great and Thursday Lecture" in Boston*
- 1846 *Installed as minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society*
- 1860 *Died in Florence, Italy*

HIS SERMONS were so liberal that even the Unitarians criticized him for being too radical. Guided by the conviction that God demanded that all life be brought into accord with His standards, he preached on every major issue of his day. Whether speaking against liquor or war, he refused to compromise. It is no wonder that Theodore Parker became one of the most controversial and yet popular preachers in American history.

LIFE AND TIMES

He was born August 24, 1810, in Lexington, Massachusetts. His home was an old frame house in the midst of a meadow; the nearest neighbor was a mile away. Part of a large family—he was the eleventh child—he learned the give-and-take of family life. Theodore was the baby, and his mother lavished

special care on him. Although she was forty-seven when he was born and died when he was only thirteen, more than any other person she molded his character. At night she read to him from the Bible. Concerned about his moral welfare, she taught him the meaning of conscience in a way he never forgot.

His father was a thoughtful man, active in his community and busy most of the time in his workshop. He had little time to give his youngest son. He read much and talked little; his thinking drifted toward skepticism. Yet on Sunday, the family attended church. Under the influence of his mother and of the church, Parker thought more and more about the ministry as a vocation. Preparation for the ministry seemed almost beyond his grasp, however. When he reached adolescence, only he and his father were left at home. His father, old and bent, was unable to carry on the total responsibilities of the farm, and the boy had to take more and more of the responsibility upon himself.

But Parker was determined not to be a farmer or a mechanic, and he began to sever his ties with the farm. As a seventeen-year-old boy, he became a schoolteacher. For several years he taught school during the winter and continued to help his father during the farming season.

In 1830 he decided that he must make some definite move toward training for the ministry, and so he enrolled at Harvard College at Cambridge. He passed his examinations and enrolled as a nonresident student so that he would not have to pay tuition. His father, concerned about future expenses, was less than excited about the move. Theodore assured him that he could continue the work on the farm, his teaching, and go to school.

But he remained in Harvard only a short time; in 1831 he was invited to teach in Boston, and he accepted. His assignment was to teach Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, and philosophy! At twenty-one, without a college degree, that was a massive teaching assignment. With some apprehension, he took on the task. He studied long hours to gain the knowledge he needed for his classes.

The year of 1831 in Boston was a depressing one for Parker: his favorite sister died, his own work was difficult, and he was saving no money for future education. For consolation, he turned to religion. He went often to the Hanover Street Church where Lyman Beecher defended the faith with vigor, storming

against Catholicism and Unitarianism. Parker found Beecher's sermons depressing and turned away from preaching in disgust. Other famous pastors, such as Channing at the Federal Street Church and Ralph Waldo Emerson, were in Boston at this time. But apparently Parker heard no one other than Beecher.

Discouraged, he left Boston and went to Watertown to establish a school of his own. There he found friends, a girl to whom he was soon engaged, good food, and fresh air in the country setting. Soon his mood had completely changed. Also the pastor of a church in which he taught Sunday school guided him in his studies. By the end of the year he was ready to enter the Divinity School at Harvard.

Parker did well in his studies at Harvard, and he began to explore new ideas. He drew up a list of rules for self-discipline: "Avoid excess in meat and drink; take exercise in the air at least three hours a day; always get six hours' sleep—more is better."¹ After graduating from Harvard, he spent time preaching in various places around Cambridge and finally was called as pastor of the West Roxbury Unitarian Church near Boston. He married Lydia Cabot, the girl he had met four years earlier in Watertown.

In West Roxbury, he continued his fanatical zeal for study. He devoured books of all kinds in large numbers; many of them were books from Germany on the latest biblical scholarship. He began to write for newspapers and journals. During this time he attacked in print the most difficult social issues of his day, including slavery and inheritance of property. He also attended conventions of reformers and began to express himself openly on the relation of religion to social reform.

His convictions took concrete form; he did not believe in the unique inspiration of the Bible but rather in the inspiration of all men who sought the truth. He believed that Christianity should escape from the slavery of the church to the needs of the world. He felt dogma and ordinances to be superficial issues in comparison to the injustice and corruption in the world.

In some ways West Roxbury was an exciting place. Brook Farm was nearby, and he often went to listen to famous persons such as Nathaniel Hawthorne who came there to plot the new

1. Henry Steele Commager, *Theodore Parker* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947), p. 34. Used by permission of Henry Steele Commager.

order. But Boston drew him like a magnet; it was the true center of New England life. In Boston lived the famous persons of the time who were shaping the destiny of the future. There, for example, one might encounter Horace Mann, who directed the course of American education, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, or William Channing. Parker admired these men, though he was impatient with some of their attitudes and practices. It also concerned him that so many of these had left the church.

When Emerson left the pastorate and renounced the church, Parker paused for serious consideration of his own future. Transcendentalism, as Emerson taught it, had great appeal, but Parker determined to stay within the church. Many churchmen did not want him to remain; they charged him with heresy, criticized him sharply, and refused to exchange pulpits with him. The harsh criticism often brought Parker to tears. He realized that he was more and more bound to his own pulpit and church, though he desired a broader ministry.

The concern of his fellow clergymen is understandable. In his sermons Parker had removed Christ, the Bible, and the church from Christianity; what was left he called natural religion. The church was reduced to an ethical culture society. Unitarians prided themselves in being a creedless church, but they nonetheless considered themselves a church, and Parker's approach was too radical for other Unitarian ministers.

Ministers of the Unitarian churches, as well as those of other denominations, banded against Parker. He was bitterly denounced by members of most denominations. His published writings created an even wider storm. In his home he found comfort; his wife, Lydia, was faithful and supportive. But even in his home there was sadness. It was becoming apparent that he was to be childless, and he wanted children very much. At thirty it looked as if his whole life had collapsed around him. But he refused to take another course.

The people of Boston, unlike most of the ministers, did not reject Parker. He lectured widely in the city in the winter of 1841-42. In 1843, a group of ministers called him to come to discuss the controversy; he agreed and charges were leveled against him. He heard the ministers out and responded calmly, and there was really little action the ministers could take. Everyone felt rather foolish about the whole affair and nothing concrete came from the meeting. Nevertheless, the controversy took its toll. Parker's health failed, and a friend sent him, along

with his wife, to Europe for rest. In his European tour he continued to gather information—and ammunition—for the battle at home. He constantly visited libraries and talked with scholars.

Back in West Roxbury, he took up his chores with new relish. He intended to write huge volumes, but parish duties and lectureships kept him from the writing desk. Shortly after Christmas in 1844, he delivered one of the traditional lectures in Boston, the "Great and Thursday Lecture." Almost no one attended these lectures; they were a mere formality. But when Parker spoke, the church was packed. Parker told the gathered throng that God had indeed inspired Christ, but that he might have other and greater "christs" in store for his people. The shocked clergy scrambled to remove any further opportunities from Parker. But he could not be silenced.

As he continued to lecture, the people came to hear him in great numbers. Before long he became, for all practical purposes, an independent minister. The clergy and the social leaders of the city had nothing to do with him, but still the people flocked to hear him preach.

Parker moved to Boston to be nearer the center of things. Through his study walked many of the most famous persons of America. From there he directed social reform and religious revolution; his books were translated and distributed throughout the world. He took strong stands on controversial issues, such as preaching fervently against the war with Mexico in 1845, leading in the establishment of the Peace Society of Massachusetts, and speaking against poverty, slavery, and alcohol.

In many ways he was more conservative than some of the other radicals in Boston. He was not a pacifist, yet he painted a black picture of war. He was not a radical abolitionist, but he objected to slavery in a more convincing way than many of the most outspoken abolitionists. He refused to accept socialism, yet he described in harsh terms the sins of the wealthy and the corruption of the private property system.

In order to provide a platform for his views, his friends organized a church for him in Boston. In 1846 he conducted his own installation as minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society. He determined to build this society into a true Christian church. He described his idea of a Christian church:

A Christian Church should be the means of reforming the world, of forming it after the pattern of Christian ideas. It should therefore bring up the sentiments of the

times, the ideas of the times, and the actions of the times, to judge them by the universal standard. We expect the sins of commerce to be winked at in the streets; the sins of the state to be applauded on election day and in a Congress, or on the Fourth of July; we are used to hearing them called the righteousness of the nation. You expect them to be tried by passion, which looks only to immediate results and partial ends.

Here they are to be measured by Conscience and Reason, which look to permanent results and universal ends; to be looked at with reference to the Laws of God, the everlasting ideas on which alone is based the welfare of the world. If the church be true, many things which seem gainful in the street and expedient in the senate-house, will here be set down as wrong, and all gain which comes therefrom seem to be but a loss. If there be a public sin in the land, if a lie invade the state, it is for the church to give the alarm; it is here that it may war on lies and sin; the more widely they are believed in and practised, the more are they deadly, the more to be opposed. Here let no false idea or false action of the public go without exposure or rebuke. But let no noble heroism of the times, no noble man pass by without due honor.²

True to his purpose, he labored to reform society. He stated the facts of poverty, drunkenness, ignorance, prostitution, and crime. He stimulated persons to work for change and agitated for further social action. He organized charitable and social welfare societies, lectured, wrote, preached, served on committees, and circulated petitions.

Hardly anything escaped his attention: he advocated women's rights, stressed the need for stable marriage, condemned dishonesty in business, urged compassion in commerce, and pled the cause of the temperance movement. Parker himself cheerfully signed the temperance pledge with a gold pen.

Often in his campaigns he had to weigh conflicting feelings and take a stand; this was particularly true with regard to the temperance question. He contended that there was nothing wrong with drinking in moderation. Yet he was also convinced that the American character was so given to extremes that the only way to prevent wholesale drunkenness was legislation

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

against it. He thought that it was the duty of the state to take care of its citizens, and that if the state took care of its citizens properly, it must eliminate drinking.

None of his positions was more controversial than that on slavery. He was not radical enough to suit some and too radical for many others. Because of his outspoken earnestness in opposition to slavery, he won the everlasting hatred of the South. He not only spoke against slavery, he acted against it; he flaunted the Fugitive Slave Bill, was brought to trial, and released. He wrote a lengthy defense of his position and published it. Though he respected the law, he insisted that there was a time for civil disobedience. In fact Henry Steele Commager writes:

The only laws he cared to respect were the laws of human nature. Indict him for contempt of court! There was only one Judge whose authority he acknowledged; black-robed judges could not scare him. Confront him with the prohibitions of the Constitution, he pointed to the guarantees. Charge him with inciting rebellion, he would reply that "rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."³

The statements of Parker in the 1850s regarding slavery sound strangely like the appeals of the leaders of the civil rights movement in the struggle against segregation a century later.

He worked without ceasing for the causes in which he believed. Yet he managed time for preaching. In 1856 he took on an additional preaching responsibility, an independent church in Watertown. Each Sunday for a year he drove out to the town and preached. He felt he owed the town a great deal because of what it had contributed to his youth.

Until the end of his life he endured harsh criticism. In the revival of the mid-1850s, he was both prayed for and viciously attacked. One clergyman said of him, "Hell never vomited forth a more blasphemous monster than Theodore Parker."⁴

The hard work, the constant conflict, the bitter criticism, all took their toll. When he was forty-seven he commented, "I am an old man." Lack of rest and recreation broke his health. Yet he felt he could not leave his responsibilities—the weekly preaching at the Music Hall in Boston, the committee meetings,

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 212–15.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

the writing—all that he was involved in seemed to call for his daily attention.

Then came the end. One Sunday morning blood trickled from his mouth: the diagnosis was tuberculosis. There followed a round of doctors, travel, warmer climates, and sympathy from friends. But the disease was too extensive to conquer. In 1860 he died in Florence, Italy.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Although Channing's name is the best known in American Unitarianism, Theodore Parker remains as its greatest preacher. Channing was a gifted and talented speaker, but his sermons did not attract the crowds nor deal as specifically with the issues as Parker's did. Brooks Frothingham, who could be accused of more than a little prejudice since he was Parker's biographer, compared the two men:

He was greater than Channing in range and thought, in learning, in breadth of human sympathy, in vitality of interest in common affairs, in wealth of imagination, and in the racy flavor of his spoken or written speech. Channing had an equal moral earnestness; an equal depth of spiritual sentiment; a superior gift of look, voice, expression, manner; perhaps a more finely endowed speculative apprehension; a subtler insight; but as a preacher, he addressed a smaller class of his fellow men. His was an aristocratic, Parker's a democratic mind. . . . Channing could sympathize with great popular ideas and movements, but was too fastidious to be ever in close contact with the people: Parker was a man of the people through and through; one of the people, as much at home with the plainest as with the most cultured, more heartily at home with the simple than with the polished: hence his word ran swiftly in rough places, while Dr. Channing's trod daintily in high places.⁵

In any case, Parker attracted great crowds and built a unique congregation. Parker's church must have been one of the most unusual in the world. His audiences were throngs of people from every walk of life, but they were far from the ordinary

5. Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Theodore Parker: A Biography* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1876), pp. 340-41.

churchgoers. They did not assemble in the usual churchly fashion in a mood of reverence; there were no rites, symbols, ceremonies, or ecclesiastical or doctrinal trappings. Parker read the Bible, but he read many other writings besides. Hymns were sung, but they were not from collections in general use among Christians. Perhaps only in the prayers did the service resemble other churches at all.

The listeners came in such clothes as they had, sat on whatever seats they could find, and went out if they were tired. Some brought newspapers in their pockets which they read until the preacher came in; some showed by their fidgeting that they were impatient with the prayers or the hymns and that they came for the sermon alone. The expenses were met by private contributions, mostly given by a few devoted friends. The crowd that heard him from Sunday to Sunday felt little attachment to one another or the church itself; only the intellectual satisfaction of hearing Theodore Parker held them together.

His sermons were grave and solid, seldom less than an hour in length and often more; they were crammed with thought. The preacher took the intelligence of his audience for granted—sometimes too much for granted. Those who listened to him regularly got a liberal education not only in theology or religion, but also in politics, history, literature, science, art, and everything else that Parker's nimble mind could seize.

Parker was not gifted as an orator. Those who heard him said that he had a searching gaze, but even that was marred because he wore glasses. He did not have an imposing stature or graceful gestures. He moved little as he spoke: only occasionally did his hand rise and fall on the manuscript before him, and even then only the hand moved; his body was motionless and his arm still. He read his sermons except for rare occasions when he injected an extemporaneous paragraph. His voice was neither musical nor powerful; it had little training. His audiences were held under the spell of his earnest thought, uttered in such simple language that a plain man once remarked on leaving the church: "Is that Theodore Parker? You told me he was a remarkable man; but I understood every word he said."

His style was never dry; his sentences were short and striking, the language vigorous. There were some passages of great descriptive genius, but the steady pace of his sermons appealed more to the head than the heart.

Many have thought of Parker as exclusively intellectual, but

his biographer called that notion a great mistake. One man who heard every sermon that he preached in Boston, and who occasionally sat near him on the platform, said:

More than half the time in his prayer I could see the tears running down his face before he was done. Two years, on attempting to read on Easter Sunday the story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, he could not get through; but overcome by his emotions had to sit down and give way to his tears.⁶

Parker believed in prayer. A friend once asked him, "Is it not sometimes a burden to the preacher to go through the devotional exercises of Sunday?" "Never to me," Parker replied. "The natural attitude of my mind has always been prayerful. A snatch of such feeling passes through me as I walk in the streets, or engage in any work. I sing prayers when I loiter in the woods, or travel the quiet road. . . . The utterance of a prayer is . . . as simple to me as breathing."⁷

He loved to preach. He laid out his subjects for four years in advance and adhered to his plan. He spoke on all the vital affairs of the community, social reform and all of its branches, and the immediate philosophical, theological, and ethical questions of the day. Most of his sermons were planned during the summer on his vacations. Unlike most preachers, Parker felt that there were too few Sundays rather than too many.

Naturally his theological position caused him a great deal of opposition, but he weathered those intellectual storms rather easily. The cold stares of people on the street hurt him more, but the most painful wound he ever received came from a criticism of his worship service: S. G. Howe remarked that he did not go to hear Parker more often because his preaching did not satisfy his religious nature. Parker's answer to that criticism, written in his private journal, tells more about his philosophy of preaching and the true nature of his spirit than any other comment ever written:

This is, in reality the most painful criticism I have ever heard made on my ministry. I never before heard of anyone as objecting to my preaching that it was not

6. Ibid., p. 336.

7. Ibid., pp. 336-37.

religious enough. Several have gone away for various reasons: these because I preached against war; those because I preached against slavery; yet others because I preached against intemperance and the making drunkards of men; others, again, because I spoke against the misdeeds of the political parties. Some have left me because I did not believe the popular theology and so hurt their feelings (all that is natural); several more because the place was not respectable and the audience was composed chiefly of "grocers and mechanics": but this is the first that I know of who has gone elsewhere because my preaching was not *religious* enough.

But who knows how many have been grieved away by the same thing? "God help me to know myself, that I may see how frail I am!" Dr. Howe said that other men went down into the deep places of his heart more than I and gave him a glow of religion which I fail to produce. Prof. Porter accused me of sentimentalism in religion. I did not think that was true of a man that wore a blue frock, and held the plow, and mowed hay, and delivered temperance lectures, and stormed around the land, preaching anti-slavery, and making such a tumult as I once made.

I once loved pleasure; and religion kept me in. I loved money—even now I have a passion for acquisition, and once resolved to accumulate a hundred thousand dollars; but religion forbade me to be rich while the poor needed food and the ignorant cannot go to college. I love ease; but I don't take it. Religion keeps me at this desk and sends me to do a thousand things, which even now, I'd like not to do. I love fame, and for religion I took a path that I knew would lead me to infamy all my life; and, if anything ever comes of it, it will be when I am wholly oblivious to all such things. I love the society of cultivated people, a good name, respectability, and all that; and religious conviction has deprived me of it all, made me an outcast and the companion of outcasts, and given me a name more hated than any in all New England.

I see men stare at me in the street and point, and say, "That is Theodore Parker," and look at me as if I were a *murderer*. Old friends, even parishioners, will not bow to me in the street. I am cast out of all respectable society.

I knew all this would come. It has come from my religion; and I would not forego that religion for all

this world can give. I have borne sorrows that bowed men together til they can in no wise lift themselves up. But my comfort has been the joy of religion: my delight is in the Infinite God; and that has sustained me.

Yet I am glad of the criticism; and, true or not, I will profit by it.⁸

With that sort of determined spirit, it is no wonder that so many people felt attracted by his preaching. The sermons included in this selection show Parker at his best, particularly as an ethical preacher. Only a handful of preachers in the history of the Christian faith have been as forthright in their application of scriptural principles to social injustice.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 344-45.

Sermons

CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:12).

JUST NOW THE WRATH of a large and excellent class of the community is excited against such as commit great crimes of violence, and there is much talk of the necessity of going backwards in law-making, to revive the barbarous punishment of death, to restore the gallows with its swift and public hanging. Not only rash and cruel men incline this way, and that spontaneously; but many sober, discreet and humane persons, on cool reflection, come out for the gallows. So let us look the matter fairly in the face and see what the facts are, and our consequent duty. Accordingly, this morning I lay aside the subject I should else more gladly have treated, and ask your attention to some thoughts on crime and its punishment.

Certain things are naturally right, just, or fair; that is, they have the approbation of the moral faculty within us, when it acts soberly. This happens as we declare that certain things are true because they correspond to the intellectual faculty when it acts soberly. Thus it is right to give each man his just due; it is true that two and two are four. We are certain that the one is absolutely right, and the other is absolutely true; nobody doubts either. The conscience tells us what is right, the intellect what is true. The absolute right is the natural ideal rule of conduct for mankind. The private conscience is to declare it for John and Jane; the public conscience, the aggregate moral sense of all, is to declare it for Massachusetts, America, England, the human race. By their moral nature all mankind are amenable, primarily each to his own conscience, and secondarily all to his ideal rule of conduct, to justice, the natural law of God; for the function of conscience is to make the constitution of the universe into the common law and daily practice of all mankind, to make the universal law of God the private

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law of John and Jane, of Massachusetts, America, England, of all mankind.

But as man is finite—with limited power to know and to do—and individually and collectively progressing, advancing from babyhood to the high excellence of manhood, and also partially free, directed by his own personal will, which acts independent of circumstances, or at least superior to them, it is plain he may err in two ways. First, he may fail to know the right, through lack of moral perception; or, second, he may fail to do the right he knows, through lack of moral will and power to perform the right. This two-fold failure happens to each man that was, is, or will be, and in all our relations in life. There never has been, and there never will be, a man who does not sometimes make both these mistakes, now failing to see the right, and then failing to do the right he has seen.

John and Jane will now and then make mistakes individually in their small sphere, America and England nationally in their large domain, and mankind humanly, will thus err in its mundane sweep and compass. All commit errors; indeed, the history of the individual, the nation, the race, is that of progress by experiment, wherein many experiments fail. Men make mistakes in their speculative attempt to learn the absolute right, the ideal rule of conduct; and also in their practical experiments, the endeavor to learn the concrete right, the most profitable way of making the ideal rule of conduct the actual fact of daily life. God has made us so that our progress is by experiment, but likewise so that we advance, even by means of the experiment which fails, for that shows us the wrong which we are to shun, and indicates to us where we are to look for the right we should do. . . .

A violation of the statutes is what is called a crime, and if they be just, the crime is also a wrong, an offense against the constitution of the universe. And as I am to speak to-day chiefly of statutes that are just, it is also of crimes which are likewise wrongs that I speak.

To secure obedience to the statute law-makers provide a punishment for such as break it. This punishment is intentionally of two kinds: the first is a hurt inflicted on the criminal's property, the second a hurt to his body. But there is also, though perhaps unintentionally, a third kind of punishment, a certain disgrace, a hurt inflicted on the spirit of the criminal who suffers the legal harm in his property or person.

Punishment is older than conventional rules of conduct—omitting cases of immediate resistance against a wrong, and it comes about in this way: John strikes Thomas, and Thomas strikes John back again in revenge. That is the earliest step in legislation; fist-law is the oldest law of all. Next, many Thomases, or some great Thomas, make a statute forbidding that kind of wrong for the future, and denouncing a certain kind of punishment against it; that seems to be the second step in legislation.

It is interesting to study man's treatment of crime. I find three distinct periods therein. At first the motive which led to the infliction of

punishment was an instinctive desire of revenge; and that seems to be the earliest moral impulse of man in his wild state, as it is of every baby in his cradle to-day. The whole of human history is compacted into the brief compass of a single individual, and whoso studies the cradle may understand the progressive development of mankind which is condensed in that abridgement of humanity.

I take it that revenge for the wrong we suffer is older than remorse for the wrong we do, older than gratitude for the favors we receive. Indeed, it is indispensable that it should be so, as the instinct of self-preservation which it grows out of comes into bearing earlier than the instinct of self-purification, whence at a later day both remorse and gratitude will also be gathered. If not so writ in books, it is so wrought in facts. The more you think of this, the more you will admire and reverence the wisdom of that Divine Providence which makes it so. Life, the foundation, must be secure ere aught is built thereon. In man as in nature all things are bottomed well.

In a rude stage of man's development the only motive for punishment seems to be vindictive; it is to revenge a wrong that has been done, it is wholly retrospective. But the providence of God acts through the instincts of man for ends that we know not till they appear. It is by and by found out that the punishment which was meant only as vengeance against a wrong already done has a tendency to prevent such wrong for the future. Man acts on this discovery, makes statutes and decrees punishments.

Then the second motive for punishment appears; it is also a desire to prevent crime for the future, as well as to revenge a wrong already done in the past. The first is the vindictive motive; vengeance is the aim. The second is the repressive, economic motive, where the aim is to prevent future wrong, not to revenge the past; and as speedy and painful hurt in public seems to deter men from crime, so the most awful punishments are inflicted on the wrong-doer, for the punishment is not revengeful and retrospective, and so proportioned to the kind and quantity of the wrong, but is suppressive, economic, prospective, and intended to prevent future crime and so designed to achieve that end. Thus in England the statute puts a man to death for stealing property to the amount of five shillings, not because so small a theft required so large a forfeit, but because theft was the common crime, and death was thought the most likely to put an end to pilfering. The rich man made the repressive statutes and said, "Stealing must be put down any way, and so we must resort to such means as will stop the thief."

I need not, however, go so far back to find an example. To-day Virginia, with most of the other Southern States, has a law which provides that the crime of teaching a colored person to read the Lord's Prayer or anything else shall be punished by imprisonment for various periods from six months to seven years. In this case the legislators did not inquire if the punishment was an adequate retaliation for teaching

poor children to read; they only said, "The slaves must be kept from knowing anything which will develop their humanity, convince them of their natural rights, and incite them to desire their freedom; and accordingly we must visit all humane men with such penalties as will deter them from teaching the alphabet to the colored child."

Alas, I need not go to Virginia to find examples of disproportionate punishment, a worse statute hangs its penalty over your heads in Boston. The Fugitive Slave Bill provides that if any one shall aid a fugitive slave to have his natural and unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, he shall be fined a thousand dollars and shut up in jail twelve months. The law-makers did not think that obedience to the golden rule of the Christian religion was so great a wrong that it could not be partly revenged by any smaller hurt to the Christian's body or estate; but they wanted to prevent the escape of the men they had stolen and held in chains. . . .

Philanthropic men arise no doubt even in savage times, and protest against the wrong of the criminal, and the vindictive or repressive wrong of the community which punishes him. I doubt not that even amongst the revengeful red men of our own country there were women full of loving kindness and tender mercy, whose presentient souls kindled some philanthropic fire amid the darkness of those times, and made a little morning of humanity in some poor, cold wigwam.

Christendom has not yet come to the high height of philanthropy, only some words of Jesus went up so far; and now and then a noble man, or more commonly a noble woman, moves in that direction. We must not scold; Christendom is advancing towards it, and New England has in general got a good way on, with the promise that she will yet go farther still.

See how mankind has treated other classes of men. Once all who were born feeble-bodied, lame, blind, deaf, foolish, were either killed outright, or else left to perish, man consciously doing what the bees instinctively do, who kill the needless drones when winter sets in. Insane persons were likewise simply got rid of in the same way or else shut up to prevent them from doing mischief. But at length all these unfortunate persons are adopted by the State, protected, educated, and developed, so far as their nature can receive the education of the age. See what New England is doing to-day! Nobody grudges the money which Massachusetts pays for the blind, the crazy, and the idiotic. In respect of them philanthropy prevails, and the State institutions for their protection and welfare are even grander monuments of New England excellence than yonder tall column of stone which also points to God's higher law. I reverence that bloody finger which in darkness and in day, year out year in, on Bunker Hill, from out our father's graves continually points up to that eternal justice, unaltered, inseparable, from old, from new, whereto their spirits whom it led and blesses now seem to look forth and say, "Thou dost preserve the

stars from wrong, / And the most ancient heavens through Thee are fresh and strong." But still more do I reverence the lunatic hospital, the blind asylum, the idiot school. The column, which so ornaments the heroic ground, tells of the valor of men undisciplined who could fight for their own fortunes. They had great earthly virtue which that cheap stone commemorates—I sometimes wonder that such cowards bear their names; but these houses of charity show that the children of such valiant sires can deny themselves, and pay large money, and nice science, too, for the protection of the most unfortunate class of creatures born into our rich and happy northern homes. Be thankful for that courage and bravery of flesh, "primal virtues," which once shone "aloft as stars"; and also that now "the charities which soothe, and heal, and bless / Are scattered at the feet of men like flowers."

At this time all these three motives affect our treatment of criminals; punishments are designed to revenge, repress, correct. But the nobler motive continually and progressively obtains over the meaner, and it is but rarely that the desire for revenge appears in the moral feeling of the people of New England. I remember but here and there an instance. Once, when a professor of Harvard College committed that ghastly crime, which will always be known as "the great Boston murder." Desire of revenge comes over even cool, thoughtful, and religious men, for such a terrible crime as that stirred the revengeful instinct, which commonly slumbers in such bosoms, covered over with the peaceful ashes of our quiet hearths. But commonly the more generous motives so far prevail over the mean and selfish that in forty years we have swept many a ghastly statute from the law-book of Massachusetts; and are unconsciously revising the whole system of penal law. We have lessened the vindictive element and developed the repressive into wiser forms; and the philanthropist has advanced to a much greater extent than ever before, here or elsewhere. The Legislature of 1855, the first Know-nothing Legislature, as it was called, was severely laughed at in consequence of its simplicity of heart; but it did great service in this direction, as well as in various other matters, and I think performed a grander service for the State than any which ever sat since the majority of us were born. When hanging was put off for a year it seemed as if put off forever. It did seem then as if Massachusetts would cut down the gallows-tree, and no new shoot would come up from the savage stump of vengeance. . . .

I know the difficulty, but do not hope to escape it so directly. We cannot overcome crime, more than madness, idiocy, and blindness, by the gallows alone. To get rid of a criminal is one thing—a single blow with an ax will do that—but to finish the race of criminals, and get rid of crime, is quite a different thing.

I find three distinct causes of crime, which distinguishes so many classes of offenders.

The first and most obvious cause is purely personal, the free will of

the individual controlling his action. Man is indeed partially free and self-directed; yet his freedom is not absolute, but dependent on a complication of circumstances; and if you study the psychology of a hundred cases of crime you find that the individual volition was the smallest part of it. The wicked deed did not gush out from a single spring, the offender's personal will; but oozed forth from the whole mountain-side of material and social circumstances. Men of strong will are not often criminals in this way. Punishment is designed to affect man's free will by furnishing a new terror to vice. No doubt the certain knowledge that crime will be followed by hurt to property, person or honor is a powerful means of preventing the crime itself in men of strong will, and a wholesome stimulus to persons of weak wills.

The next cause is organic. There is a malformation of the material frame, the constitution inclining the man to some special wrong. Some men are so born that they are disposed to murder, in the same way as the wolf, only not in the same degree. There is such a man in the Lunatic Asylum at Taunton, sent from the State Prison. He is afflicted with what is called murderous insanity, and is organized in his osteology to be a murderer. All of you have seen pictures of the heads of murderers, and noticed the peculiarity so clearly pointed out by phrenologists. This is born in the bones of some men, for as some are born blind or deaf or idiotic, so are others born with an inherent disposition to various crimes. But this class is small, not larger than the class of blind, deaf, dumb or idiotic persons; and this malformation is a part of the evil which the vices of old times have entailed upon us.

The third cause is social, the general disposition of the community or nation, the general tone of society. This is the great circumstance which controls the character of nine persons out of ten, making them Christian or Mahometan, Protestant or Catholic, Unitarian or Trinitarian, just as their surroundings incline them. This social cause, the vice of society, affects men of weak will and feeble moral perception and organic tendency to crime.

Those who commit offenses against the person are commonly born in low places, surrounded by evil circumstances; they are commonly weak-minded men who are easily affected by the general current of evil in society; for as the strong winds blow heaviest on great tall trees which stand high up on hill-tops and mountain-sides, so the wickedness of the community or nation falls most heavy in the lowest places, on the weakest men. To him who by birth or education has great moral talents, the vice of society gives yet more, for it stimulates him to manly efforts of philanthropy to put down the evil; but to him who by birth or education has little virtue, this vice of society takes away that which he seemed to have. There are few persons, I suppose, who at present would originate the scarlet fever; but every child may catch it by bodily touch or the infection in the air. And so it is with many

crimes, which the lowest class in the community take by infection or contagion, but would not originate.

Now see what social causes there are to vitiate the character of this class of men who are born with feeble moral forces and weak will, yet with a structure inclining them to various kinds of vice — causes which induce men to commit great crimes against property and person.

Look at the conduct of American society in respect to property. I will take a conspicuous example, known to everybody. A few years ago the State of Florida repudiated her debt of three millions of dollars, and the constitution of the State, which was accepted by Congress, forbids the payment of this great sum of actual indebtedness. Again, for twenty years the State of Mississippi has refused to pay the interest on a lawful debt of two and a half millions of dollars, and she utterly repudiates another of five millions more; but her assessed property is more than two hundred and fifty millions of dollars. Arkansas pays no interest on her debt of two and a half millions of dollars; she can, and will not. The United States refuses to pay the honest debt which the government owes to persons who suffered from French spoliation fifty or sixty years ago.

Look at the conduct of municipal bodies in their disposition of public money. Look at the public wickedness of the authorities of New York, whose plunder is by wholesale. But I need not go out of Boston to find examples enough to show that puritanic honesty has not been perpetually present for four or five years past in the management of our municipal money. You know the reputation of our own city government under several previous administrations. Why do such things excite no more stern indignation amongst men? Because they are not so very exceptional as we sometimes profess.

Besides this, recall the great swindling operations in Boston which have gone unpunished. You know the way in which some great estates have been got in Boston, and how the reputation of the gatherers was enhanced by the increase of their money, obtained in a way not less dishonest than if the men had committed downright and open burglary.

Need I mention other frauds? Take a single example in which you and I are alike interested. Everybody reads books, everybody writes, the quality and cost of paper is a matter which concerns us all. Paper is estimated partly by its surface—it must be smooth, and partly by its weight. Now to ensure a smooth surface, and at the same time secure adequate weight, the paper-makers of New England have found the art of mixing clay with their materials, by which they secure a glossy surface and the requisite weight, but the paper is far less valuable; it wears out the printer's type and the writer's pen, and will not endure long. A single house informed me that they were cheated out of fifteen hundred dollars by the paper-makers in publishing a

single book. Do you wonder, these things being so, that crimes of violence against property are so common amongst low and poor persons? We must reap as we sow.

Look at American society in respect to crimes against the person. Remember what the United States did to Mexico. We plundered her with the armed hand, and slew forty thousand of her citizens. She had committed but one offense; she had a million and a half square miles of land that we wanted. So Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard; no, it was Jezebel, who forced her weaker husband into the scheme. You know how they wickedly got possession of it, and you remember the prophecy against Ahab, "In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine," and "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."

You recollect what the American Government has done to Kansas, what burning, what robbery, what rape and what murder the American Government has committed against honest people there. It was only the Sharpe's rifles of New England which kept the Government from establishing slavery there. The general Government appointed bullies to high office there, and from first to last not an outrage against the free-state settlers has been punished. Recollect also what we are now doing in Nicaragua. I think the invasion of this place, though not done with the ordinary public formalities, is just as much the act of the American people as the election of the president. Consider what we propose against Cuba, to seize it with the hand red with the blood of peaceful men, to perpetuate slavery there. One of the favorite projects of the day is the restoration of the African slave-trade. The merchants like it, and there are plenty of ministers who encourage it as a means of evangelizing Africa. Remember that fifty-seven members of the House of Representatives voted for it—a small vote, yet remember that the trade is carried on, and the American Government only makes a pretense of preventing it; and when a vessel was fitted out from Boston for this purpose, the city authorities got into a steeple with a spyglass and looked at it, and did not send to arrest the slave-trader till it was miles away and had passed the light-house. Remember that another branch of the slave-trade is carried on from Boston, the trade in white men, kidnapped in China, and sold in South America; and the men who engage in the traffic lose nothing of reputation in church or society here in Boston. Remember that four millions of men are seized and plundered by the United States, their babies taken away from the women, and their earnings from the men. Remember also that in 1851 a conspicuous merchant in Boston declared that if anybody would murder Wendell Phillips, and he stood as foreman of a jury to try the murder, he would return a verdict of justifiable homicide—served him right!

In Virginia there are 54,333 free colored persons, and in that State, whose gentry are descended from those thieves sent out from Eng-

land, that I just spoke of, it has been publicly proposed to seize these men and sell them at four hundred dollars apiece for slaves, and thus put twenty-one millions of dollars into the exhausted treasury of the State. Why should that strike you with horror? Is there not a law in Massachusetts to-day which authorizes a man to steal a black man? Is not the Fugitive Slave Bill recognized as law? and is it any worse for Virginia to steal these fifty-four thousand men than for Boston to steal a free man? Remember the barbarities practised in the slave States themselves. In the first four months of 1856, they burned four men alive, partly for vengeance, partly for sport; in the last month they shot or hanged some forty slaves, on suspicion that they were intending to rise and secure their freedom, and two more they whipped to death—thus with scorpions ending the year, which they began with sticks of green wood, making a holocaust of their Christmas, and filling up the whole Christian year with their murderous agony. All this is instancial, not the exception, all defended at the North and in Boston.

Recollect that duelling is a common practice in more than half the land. Remember that last year an honorable Southern member of Congress in the street beat a Northern editor with a club, and went unpunished; and another honorable representative to Congress with a bludgeon beat and maimed a noble senator of Massachusetts, and not only went with no punishment, but was welcomed with new honors all over the South, had gifts showered on him by the men and kisses by the women; one of your own representatives called him a brave man, and one of your own city council declared that he was sorry that Mr. Brooks had not killed Mr. Sumner. Remember that a third Southern member of Congress in the breakfast room of a hotel murdered a black man and had no punishment. Recall the conduct of Boston for six years; remember the Union meeting when Democrats and Whigs came together and determined to steal Ellen Craft. Remember the kidnapping of Shadrack, Thomas Sims, and Anthony Burns; remember the Boston judge of probate, the Boston military, the mayor, the United States soldiers with sabers, muskets, cannons; remember the men struck and wounded; recollect that no man has ever been punished for all these wicked deeds, and the man who drew the illegal writs still holds his office against law, that the men who with swords slashed the heads of peaceful citizens have never felt the weight of Massachusetts justice, and never will. And when all these things take place, are you astonished that a miserable, ill-born, ill-bred convict in the State Prison kills his keeper, an honest and very estimable man, without any provocation? Reap as you sow! Remember that when Boston was kidnapping Anthony Burns, one of your most enlightened ministers exclaimed, "It is only a single man, and what is the liberty of one man compared to the peace of Boston for a day?"

Remember that these things have been justified by the highest

authorities in America, legislative, judicial, and executive; and also that the tall pulpits, bottomed on money, have declared that there is no higher law, and then how will you affect to wonder that the convict kills his keeper? When a minister in country lyceums and city societies is applauded because he says that to save the Union he would send his own mother into slavery, are you astonished that the convict criminal kills his victim with a knife? Years ago men laid down the atheistic principle, there is no law of God higher than the ambition of the office-seeker; and years ago did I warn men against the consequences of the atheistic principle, and remind them that they who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind. Well, is it fair just now to say that all this murderous evil comes from a mistaken philanthropy? Think of all Massachusetts in the act of prayer and fasting, confessing her sins and saying, "O Lord, we have erred in putting away the gallows and leaving hanging undone, and we have sought to reform and Christianize men, when we ought to have murdered them. Help us to hang the murderer, O Lord!" Picture to yourself Boston on her knees, nay, standing before the seven golden candle sticks, and saying, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other towns! My police report that I have three thousand rum-shops, open all day and Sunday too; pardon me that I have but a single gallows. If thou wilt be my Lord, I will build thee up a new gallows, fifty cubits high." Is that the confession Boston is to make? Go to now! Massachusetts must make a very different shrift.

We are corrupt inwardly, and our sins break out, and robberies and murders are only the public toadstools which have sprung from that dung-hill which the Church and State have nourished. We are too far civilized, and have too much respect for the name Christian, to consciously kill murderers for vengeance. We know too well also, that we have no right to kill the little offenders when we let the great ones escape. Think of Boston hanging a man for murder when she has the sin of three kidnappers on her head, and her heart has not repented of it yet. If you hang a man you simply have got rid of *him*, not of the crime for which he suffered. I think there was not a man in New England who had seen so many hangings and guillotinings, or who so well understood that form of death, as that great Boston murderer whom I spoke of. In his younger days he was in the habit of hanging cats and dogs, to the horror of the students of Harvard College.

I say such things check a few by terror, they will not check many, they will cause new crime; the blood of a man executed only fattens the ground. I think the hanging of Washington Goode—a poor, miserable, weak-minded Negro, half mad with jealousy, and half crazed with rum, has caused more murder than the most active gallows can prevent in fifty years.

If you keep a man in jail fifty years perhaps you will not do him any good. The first time I preached on this subject, the very hour that I

was preaching, the property of some of you was being plundered, and that too by men who had been convicted of several crimes. That the robbery was committed by them there is no material doubt; by the cunning and craftiness of lawyers the criminals escaped. The inside of a jail is no more powerful to reform men than the outside. Hard labor in the week, and Calvinism on Sunday, are not means of grace calculated to touch these men, born with little moral sense, whom the vice of society has encouraged to crime. To send such men back on society while their character is bad as before, is a great wrong to society itself. A plague hospital keeps its inmates, who are only sick, till they are cured of their infection. Shall a jail do worse with its convicts? We shall have a fresh crop of criminals for some time to come. Think of a single gallows to stop up the door of three thousand rum-shops!

I should advise these things: first, to retain the criminals till they are healed. Distinguish convicts into two classes, such as become so by their will, and such as are organized for crime. The dangerous ones I should expect to keep forever, as I should insane men; I do not mean to confound insanity with vice. I would make their condition comfortable and educational, as far as possible, but not costly. They might be made to support themselves and have an opportunity to contribute something to their families or their friends, or add some creature comforts to their own condition. I know the difficulties of the matter; but I know that they can be overcome. I would have religious instruction also in all places of detention. That is the first thing.

Next, we must mend the whole community, and so cut off the causes of crime. When the dishonest trader, the kidnapper, the dealer in coolies, the slave-trader, the man who corrupts the people with his open lies, disappears from the place of public favor and confidence, then will murder vanish from your streets, not till then. It is not prudent to expect the grog-shop and brothel to be better than the parlor and the church. It is not quite just to expect a higher morality amongst convicts at Charlestown than Congressmen at Washington. Would you hang Cato from New Hampshire and continue Herbert in his seat at Washington? If you would hang convicts, what are you to do with kidnappers, who commit a worse crime? For the present crisis I would rather shut up the three thousand rum-shops than build a new gallows.

I would appoint firm men for prison-keepers, not men of mawkish sensibility; but men of stern philanthropy; and I should not ask of a candidate what his politics were, whether he was a Whig, a Democrat, a Know-nothing or a Republican, only if he was a man fit for the post; and when I found such a one I would keep him forever, if there was money enough in the State to pay him.

I would have religious instruction there, and for that I would not take a minister with mere book religion, but a man with piety of heart

and life; not a priest who thinks man is a little weak devil by nature, and God a great strong devil by will; but a man who knows the Infinite God by heart, and has the humanity, the self-respect and the divinity of love. To preach the religion of fear, which makes man a worm, and God a devil with fiery foot forever treading on that worm, is bad enough in a meeting-house, full of rich men, who can afford to sleep. But the theology of damnation is still worse when preached in a jail, for there the poor wretch has no shelter to screen him from the hail of eternal torment which the minister pours down on him from the windows of inverted hell. The gospel of love would not be wasted anywhere; in a jail it would be the good physician among the sick. . . .

But we shall live through this crisis. The oldest among you remember to have seen naked women scourged in State Street; the gallows will go where the whipping-post has gone before, and by moral forces we shall at length overcome the immorality which is in man. It was said of old by the divine soul that you cannot cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils, but by the finger of God we cast them out, and angels shall come to take their place.

POVERTY

“The destruction of the poor is their poverty” (Proverbs 10:15).

BY POVERTY, I mean the state in which a man does not have enough to satisfy the natural wants of food, raiment, shelter, warmth, and the like. From the earliest times that we know of, there have been two classes of men, the rich who had more than enough, the poor who had less. In one of the earliest books which treats of the condition of men, we find that Abraham, a rich man, owns the bodies of three hundred men that are poor. In four thousand years, the difference between rich and poor in our part of America is a good deal lessened, not done away with. In New England property is more uniformly distributed

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than in most countries, perhaps more equally than in any land as highly civilized. But even here the old distinction remains in a painful form and extended to a pitiful degree.

At one extreme of society is a body called the rich, men who have abundance, not a very numerous body, but powerful, first through the energy which accumulates money, and secondly through the money itself. Then there is a body of men who are comfortable. This class comprises the mass of the people in all the callings of life. Out of this class the rich men come, and into it their children or grandchildren commonly return. Few of the rich men of Boston were sons of rich men; still fewer grandsons; few of them perhaps will be fathers of men equally rich; still fewer grandfathers of such. Then there is the class that is miserable. Some of them are supported by public charity, some by private, some of them by their toil alone—but altogether they form a mass of men who only stay in the world, and do not live, in the best sense of that word.

Such are the great divisions of society in respect to property. However, the lines between these three classes are not sharp and distinctly drawn. There are no sharp divisions in nature; but, for our convenience, we distinguish classes by their center, where they are most alike, and not by their circumference, where they intermix and resemble each other. The line between the miserable and comfortable, between the comfortable and rich, is not distinctly drawn. The center of each class is obvious enough, while the limits thereof are a dissolving view.

The poor are miserable. Their food is the least that will sustain nature—not agreeable, not healthy; their clothing scanty and mean, their dwellings inconvenient and uncomfortable, with roof and walls that let in the cold and the rain—dwellings that are painful and unhealthy; in their personal habits they are commonly unclean. Then they are ignorant; they have no time to attend school in childhood, no time to read or to think in manhood, even if they have learned to do either before that. If they have the time, few men can think to any profit while the body is uncomfortable. The cold man thinks only of the cold; the wretched of his misery. Besides this, they are frequently vicious. I do not mean to say they are wicked in the sight of God. I never see a poor man carried to jail for some petty crime, or even for a great one, without thinking that probably, in God's eye, the man is far better than I am, and, from the State's prison or scaffold will ascend into heaven and take rank a great way before me. I do not mean to say they are wicked before God; but it is they who commit the minor crimes, against decency, sobriety, against property and person, and most of the major crimes, against human life. I mean that they commit the crimes that get punished by law. They crowd your courts; they tenant your jails; they occupy your gallows. If some man would write a book describing the life of all the men hanged in Massachu-

setts for fifty years past, or tried for some capital offense, and show what class of society they were from, how they were bred, what influences were about them in childhood, how they passed their Sundays, and also describe the configuration of their bodies, it would help us to a valuable chapter in the philosophy of crime, and furnish mighty argument against the injustice of our mode of dealing with offenders.

Poverty is the dark side of modern society. I say modern society, though poverty is not modern, for ancient society had poverty worse than ours, and a side still darker yet. Cannibalism, butchery of captives after battle, frequent or continual wars for the sake of plunder, and the slavery of the weak—these were the dark side of society in four great periods of human history—the savage, the barbarous, the classic, and the feudal. Poverty is the best of these five bad things, each of which, however, has grimly done its service in its day.

There is no poverty among the Gaboon Negroes. Put them in our latitude, and it soon comes. Nay, as they get to learn the wants of cultivated men, there will be a poorer class even in the torrid zone. Poverty prevails in every civilized nation on earth; yes, in every savage nation in austere climes. Let us look at some examples. England is the richest country in Europe. I mean she has more wealth in proportion to her population than any other in a similar climate. Look at her possessions in every corner of the globe; at her armies, which Europe cannot conquer; at her ships, which weave the great commercial web that spread all round about the world; at home what factories, what farms, what houses, what towns, what a vast and wealthy metropolis; what an aristocracy—so rich, so cultivated, so able, so daring, and so unconquered.

But in that very English nation the most frightful poverty exists. Look at the two sister islands: this the queen, and that the beggar of all nations; the rose and the shamrock; the one throned in royal beauty, the other bowed to the dust, torn, and trampled under foot. In that capital of the world's wealth, in that center of power far greater than the power of all the Caesars, there is the most squalid poverty. Look at St. Giles's and St. James's—that the earthly hell of want and crime, this the worldly heaven of luxury and power! Put on the one side the stately nobility of England, well born, well bred, armed with the power of manners, the power of money, the power of culture, and the power of place, and on the other side put the beggary of England, the two million paupers who are kept wholly on public or private charity; the three million laborers who formerly fed on potatoes, God knows what they feed on now, and all the other hungry sons of want who are kept in awe only by the growling lion who guards the British throne; and you see at once the result of modern civilization in the ablest, the foremost, the freest, the most practical, and the richest nation in the old world.

Even here in New England, a country not two hundred and fifty years old, a little patch of cleared land on the edge of the continent, we hear of poverty which is frightful to think of. It is a serious question, what shall be done for the poor? There are few that can tell what shall be done with them, or what is to become of them. Want is always here in Boston. Misery is here. Starvation is not unknown. What is now serious will one day be alarming. Even now it is awful to think of the misery that lurks in this Christian town. New England in fifty years has increased vastly in wealth, but poverty increases too. There has been a great advance in the productiveness of human labor; with our tools a man can do as much rude work in one day as he could in three days a hundred years ago. I mean work with the ax, the plough, the spade; of nicer work, yet more; of the most delicate work, see what machines do for him.

The end is not yet; soon we shall have engines that will whittle granite, as a gang of saws cleaves logs into broad smooth boards. Yet with all this advance in the productiveness of human toil, still there is poverty. A day's work now will bring a man greater proportionate pay than ever before in New England. I mean to say that the ordinary wages for an ordinary day's work will support a man comfortably and respectably longer than they ever would before. On the whole, the price of things has come down and the price of work has gone up. Yet still there are the poor; there is want, there is misery, there is starvation. The community gives more than ever before; a better public provision is made for the poor, private benevolence is more active and works far more wisely—yet still there is poverty, want, misery, unremoved, unmitigated, and, many think, immitigable!

Now I am not going to deny that poverty, like other forms of suffering, plays a part in the economy of the human race. If God's children will not work, or will throw away their bread, I do not complain that He sends them to bed without their supper—to a hard bed, and a narrow, and a cold. "Earn your breakfast before you eat it," is not merely the counsel of Poor Richard, but of Almighty God; it is a just counsel, and not hard. But is poverty an essential, substantial, integral element in human civilization, or is it an accidental element thereof, and transiently present; is it amenable to suppression? For my own part, I believe that all evil is transient, a thing that belongs to the process of development, not to the nature of man, or the higher forms of social life towards which he is advancing. If God be absolutely good, then only good things are everlasting. This general opinion, which comes from my religion as well as my philosophy, affects my special opinion of the history and design of poverty. I look on it as on cannibalism, the butchery of captives, the continual war for the sake of plunder, or on slavery; yes, as I look on the diseases incidental to childhood, things that mankind live through and outgrow; which, painful as they are, do not make up the greatest part of the entire life of man-

kind. If it shall be said that I cannot know this, that I have not a clear intellectual perception of the providential design thereof, or the means of its removal, still I believe it, and if I have not the knowledge which comes of philosophy, I have still faith, the result of instinctive trust in God.

Let us look a little at the causes of poverty. Some things we see best on a large scale. So let us look at poverty thus, and then come down to the smaller forms thereof.

I. There may be a natural and organic cause. The people of Lapland, Iceland, and Greenland are a poor people compared with the Scotch, the Danes, or the French. There is a natural and organic cause for their poverty in the soil and climate of those countries, which cannot be changed. They must emigrate before they can become rich or comfortable in our sense of the word. Hence their poverty is to be attributed to their geographical position. Put the New Englanders there, even they would be a poor people. Thus the poverty of a nation may depend on the geographical position of the nation.

Suppose a race of men has little vigor of body or of mind, and yet the same natural wants as a vigorous race; put them in favorable circumstances, in a good climate, on a rich soil, they will be poor on account of the feebleness of their mind and body; put them in a stern climate, on a sterile soil, and they will perish. Such is the case with the Mexicans. Soil and climate are favorable, yet the people are poor. Suppose a nation had only one-third part of the Laplander's ability, and yet needed the result of all his power, and was put in the Laplander's position, they would not live through the first winter. Had they been Mexicans who came to Plymouth in 1620, not one of them, it is probable, would have seen the next summer. Take away half the sense or bodily strength of the Bushmen of South Africa, and though they might have sense enough to dig nuts out of the ground, yet the lions and hyenas would eventually eat up the whole nation. So the poverty of a nation may come from want of power of body or of mind.

Then if a nation increases in numbers more rapidly than in wealth, there is a corresponding increase of want. Let the number of births in England for the next ten years be double the number for the last ten, without a corresponding creation of new wealth, and the English are brought to the condition of the Irish. Let the number of births in Ireland in like manner multiply, and one-half the population must perish for want of food. So the poverty of a nation may depend on the disproportionate increase of its numbers.

Then an able race, under favorable outward circumstances, without an over-rapid increase of numbers, if its powers are not much developed, will be poor in comparison with a similar race under similar circumstances, but highly developed. Thus England, under Egbert, in the ninth century, was poor compared with England under Victoria, in the nineteenth century. The single town of Liverpool, Manchester,

Birmingham, or even Sheffield, is probably worth many times the wealth of all England in the ninth century. So the poverty of a nation may depend on its want of development.

Old England and New England are rich, partly through the circumstances of climate and soil, partly and chiefly through the great vigor of the race, with only a normal increase of numbers, and partly through a more complete development of the nations. Such are the chief natural and organic causes of poverty on a large scale in a nation.

II. The causes may be political. By political, I mean such as are brought about by the laws, either the fundamental laws, the constitution, or the minor laws, statutes. Sometimes the laws tend to make the whole nation poor. Such are the laws which force the industry of the people out of the natural channel, restricting commerce, agriculture, manufactures, industry in general. Sometimes this is done by promoting war, by keeping up armies and navies, by putting the destructive work of fighting, or the merely conservative work of ruling, before the creative works of productive industry. France was an example of that a hundred years ago. Spain yet continues such, as she has been for two centuries.

Sometimes this is done by hindering the general development of the nation, by retarding education, by forbidding all freedom of thought. The States of the Church are an example of this when compared with Tuscany; all Italy and Austria when compared with England; Spain, when compared with Germany, France, and Holland.

Sometimes this is brought about by keeping up an unnatural institution—as slavery, for example. South Carolina is an instance of this, when compared with Massachusetts. South Carolina has many advantages over us, yet South Carolina is poor while Massachusetts is rich.

Sometimes this political action primarily affects only the distribution of wealth, and so makes one class rich and another poor. Such is the case with laws which give all the real estate to the eldest son, laws which allow property to be entailed for a long time or for ever, laws which cut men off from the land. These laws at first seem only to make one class rich and the others poor, and merely to affect the distribution of wealth in a nation; but they are unnatural, and retard the industry of the people, and diminish their productive power, and make the whole nation less rich. Legislation may favor wealth and not men—property which is accumulated labor, rather than labor which is the power that accumulates property. Such legislation always endangers wealth in the end, lessening its quantity and making its tenure uncertain.

Two things may be said of European legislation in general, and especially of English legislation. First, that it has aimed to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few and keep it there. Hence it favors primogeniture, entails monopolies of posts of profit and of honor. Second,

it has always looked out for the proprietor and his property, and cared little for the man without property; hence it always wanted the price of things high, the wages of men low, and, in addition to natural and organic obstacles, it continually put social impediments in the poor man's way. In England no son of a laborer could rise to eminence in the law or in medicine, scarcely in the Church; no, not even in the army or navy.

These two statements will bear examination. The genius of England has demanded these two things. The genius of America demands neither, but rejects both; demands the distribution of property, puts the rights of man first, the rights of things last. Such are the political causes, and such their effects.

III. Then there are social causes which make a nation poor. Such are the prevalence of an opinion that industry is not respectable; that it is honorable to consume, disgraceful to create; that much must be spent, though little earned. The Spanish nation is poor in part through the prevalence of this opinion.

Sometimes social causes seem only to affect a class. The Pariahs in India must not fill any office that is well paid. They are despised, and of course they are poor and miserable. The blacks in New England are despised and frowned down, not admitted to the steamboat, the omnibus, to the school-houses in Boston, or even to the meeting-house with white men; not often allowed to work in company with the whites; and so they are kept in poverty. In Europe the Jews have been equally despised and treated in the same way, but not made poor, because they are in many respects a superior race of men, and because they have the advantage of belonging to a nation whose civilization is older than any other in Europe; a nation specially gifted with the faculty of thrift; a tribe whom none but other Jews, Scotchmen, or New Englanders, could outwit, overreach, and make poor. No Ferdinand and Isabella, no inquisition could so completely expel them from any country, as the superior craft and cunning of the Yankee has driven them out of New England. There are Jews in every country of Europe, everywhere despised and maltreated, and forced into the corners of society, but everywhere superior to the men who surround them. Such are the social causes which produce poverty.

Now, let us look at the matter on a smaller scale, and see the cause of poverty in New England, of poverty in Broad Street and Sea Street. From the great mass let me take out a class which are accidentally poor. There are the widows and orphan children who inherit no estate; the able men reduced by sickness before they have accumulated enough to sustain them. Then let me take out a class of men transiently poor, men who start with nothing, but have vigor and will to make their own way in the world. The majority of the poor still remain—the class who are permanently poor. The accidentally poor can easily be taken care of by public or private charity; the transient poor

will soon take care of themselves. The young man who lives on six cents a day while studying medicine in Boston, is doubtless a poor man, but will soon repay society for the slight aid it has lent him, and in time will take care of other poor men. So these two classes—the accidental and the transient poor—can easily be disposed of.

What causes have produced the class that is permanently poor? What has just been said of nations, is true also of individuals.

First, there are natural and organic causes of poverty. Some men are born into the midst of want, ignorance, idleness, filthiness, intemperance, vice, crime; their earliest associations are debasing, their companions bad. They are born into the Iceland of society, into the frigid zone, some of them under the very pole-star of want. Such men are born and bred under the greatest disadvantages. Every star in their horoscope has a malignant aspect, and sheds disastrous influence. I do not remember five men in New England, from that class, becoming distinguished in any manly pursuit—not five. Almost all of our great men and our rich men came from the comfortable class, none from the miserable. The old poverty is parent of new poverty. It takes at least two generations to outgrow the pernicious influence of such circumstances.

Then much of the permanent poverty comes from the lack of ability, power of body and of mind. In that Iceland of society men are commonly born with a feeble organization, and bred under every physical disadvantage; the man is physically weak, or else runs to muscle and not brain, and so is mentally weak. His feebleness is the result of the poverty of his fathers, and his own want in childhood. The oak tree grows tall and large in a rich valley; stunted, small, and scrubby on the barren sand.

Again, this class of men increase most rapidly in numbers. When the poor man has not half enough to fill his own mouth, and clothe his own back, other backs are added, other mouths opened. He abounds in nothing but naked and hungry children.

Further still, he has not so good a chance as the comfortable to get education and general development. A rude man, with superior abilities, in this century, will often be distanced by the well-trained man who started at birth with inferior powers. But if the rude man begin with inferior abilities, inferior circumstances, incumbered also with a load becoming rapidly more burdensome, you see under what accumulated disadvantages he labors all his life. So to the first natural and organic cause of poverty, his untoward position in society; to the second, his inferior ability; and to the third, the increase of his family, excessively rapid, we must add a fourth cause, his inferior development. An ignorant man, who is also weak in body, and besides that, starts with every disadvantage, his burdens annually increasing, may be expected to continue a poor man. It is only in most extraordinary cases that it turns out otherwise.

To these causes we must add what comes therefrom as their joint result: idleness, by which the poor waste their time; thriftlessness and improvidence, by which they lose their opportunities and squander their substance. The poor are seldom so economical as the rich; it is so with children, they spoil the furniture, soil and rend their garments, put things to a wasteful use, consume heedlessly and squander, careless of to-morrow. The poor are the children of society.

To these five causes I must add intemperance, the great bane of the miserable class. I feel no temptation to be drunken, but if I were always miserable, cold, hungry, naked, so ignorant that I did not know the result of violating God's laws, had I been surrounded from youth with the worst examples, not respected by other men, but a loathsome object in their sight, not even respecting myself, I can easily understand how the temporary madness of strong drink would be a most welcome thing. The poor are the prey of the rum-seller. As the lion in the Hebrew wilderness eateth up the wild ass, so in modern society the rum-seller and rum-maker suck the bones of the miserable poor. I never hear of a great fortune made in the liquor trade, but I think of the wives that have been made widows thereby, of the children bereft of their parents, of the fathers and mothers whom strong drink has brought down to shame, to crime, and to ruin. The history of the first barrel of rum that ever visited New England is well known. It brought some forty men before the bar of the court. The history of the last barrel can scarcely be much better.

Such are the natural and organic causes which make poverty.

With the exception of laws which allow the sale of intoxicating drink, I think there are few political causes of poverty in New England, and they are too inconsiderable to mention in so brief a sketch as this. However, there are some social causes of our permanent poverty. I do not think we have much respect for the men who do the rude work of life, however faithfully and well—little respect for work itself. The rich man is ashamed to have begun to make his fortune with his own hard hands; even if the rich man is not, his daughter is for him. I do not think we have cared much to respect the humble efforts of feeble men; not cared much to have men dear, and things cheap. It has not been thought the part of political economy, of sound legislation, or of pure Christianity, to hinder the increase of pauperism, to remove the causes of poverty; yes, the causes of crime—only to take vengeance on it when committed!

Boston is a strange place; here is energy enough to conquer half the continent in ten years; power of thought to seize and tame the Connecticut and the Merrimac; charity enough to send missionaries all over the world; but not justice enough to found a high school for her own daughters, or to forbid her richest citizens from letting bar-rooms as nurseries of poverty and crime, from opening wide gates which lead to the alms-house, the jail, the gallows, and earthly hell!

Such are the causes of poverty, organic, political, social. You may see families pass from the comfortable to the miserable class, by intemperance, idleness, wastefulness, even by feebleness of body and of mind; yet, while it is common for the rich to descend into the comfortable class, solely by lack of the eminent thrift which raised their fathers thence, or because they lack the common stimulus to toil and save, it is not common for the comfortable to fall into the pit of misery in New England, except through wickedness, through idleness, or intemperance.

It is not easy to study poverty in Boston. But take a little inland town, which few persons migrate into, you will find the miserable families have commonly been so for a hundred years; that many of them are descended from the "servants," or white slaves, brought here by our fathers; that such as fall from the comfortable classes are commonly made miserable by their own fault, sometimes by idleness, which is certainly a sin: for any man who will not work, and persists in living, eats the bread of some other man, either begged or stolen — but chiefly by intemperance. Three-fourths of the poverty of this character is to be attributed to this cause.

Now there is a tendency in poverty to drive the ablest men to work, and so get rid of the poverty; and this I take it is the providential design thereof. Poverty, like an armed man, stalks in the rear of the social march, huge and haggard, and gaunt and grim, to scare the lazy, to goad the idle with his sword, to trample and slay the obstinate sluggard. But he treads also the feeble under his feet, for no fault of theirs, only for the misfortune of being born in the rear of society. But in poverty there is also a tendency to intimidate, to enfeeble, to benumb. The poverty of the strong man compels him to toil; but with the weak, the destruction of the poor is his poverty. An active man is awakened from his sleep by the cold; he arises and seeks more covering; the indolent, or the feeble, shiver on till the morning, benumbed and enfeebled by the cold. So weakness begets weakness; poverty, poverty; intemperance, intemperance; crime, crime.

Everything is against the poor man; he pays the dearest tax, the highest rent for his house, the dearest price for all he eats or wears. The poor cannot watch their opportunity, and take advantage of the markets, as other men. They have the most numerous temptations to intemperance and crime; they have the poorest safeguards from these evils. If the chief value of wealth, as a rich man tells us, be this — that "it renders its owner independent of others," then on what shall the poor men lean, neglected and despised by others, looked on as loathsome, and held in contempt, shut out even from the sermons and the prayers of respectable men? It is no marvel if they cease to respect themselves.

The poor are the most obnoxious to disease; their children are not only most numerous, but most unhealthy. More than half of the chil-

dren of that class perish at the age of five. Amongst the poor, infectious diseases rage with frightful violence. The mortality in that class is amazing. If things are to continue as now, I thank God it is so. If Death is their only guardian, he is at least powerful, and does not scorn his work.

In addition to the poor, whom these causes have made and kept in poverty, the needy of other lands flock hither. The nobility of old England, so zealous in pursuing their game, in keeping their entails unbroken, and primogeniture safe, have sent their beggary to New England, to be supported by the crumbs that fall from our table. So, in the same New England city, the extremes of society are brought together. Here is health, elegance, cultivation, sobriety, decency, refinement—I wish there was more of it; there is poverty, ignorance, drunkenness, violence, crime, in most odious forms—starvation! We have our St. Giles's and St. James's; our nobility, not a whit less noble than the noblest of other lands, and our beggars, both in a Christian city. Amid the needy population, misery and death have found their parish. Who shall dare stop his ears, when they preach their awful denunciation of want and woe?

Good men ask, "What shall we do?" Foreign poverty has had this good effect; it has shamed or frightened the American beggar into industry and thrift.

Poverty will not be removed till the causes thereof are removed. There are some who look for a great social revolution. So do I; only I do not look for it to come about suddenly, or by mechanical means. We are in a social revolution, and do not know it. While I cannot accept the peculiar doctrines of the Associationists, I rejoice in their existence. I sympathize with their hope. They point out the evils of society, and that is something. They propose a method of removing its evils. I do not believe in that method, but mankind will probably make many experiments before we hit upon the right one. For my own part, I confess I do not see any way of removing poverty wholly or entirely, in one or two, or in four or five generations. I think it will linger for some ages to come. Like the snow, it is to be removed by a general elevation of the temperature of the air, not all at once; and will long hang about the dark and cold places of the world. But I do think it will at last be overcome, so that a man who cannot subsist will be as rare as a cannibal. "Ye have the poor with you always," said Jesus; and many who remember this, forget that he also said, "And whensoever ye will ye may do them good." I expect to see a mitigation of poverty in this country, and that before long.

It is likely that the legal theory of property in Europe will undergo a great change before many years; that the right to bequeath enormous estates to individuals will be cut off; that primogeniture will cease, and entailments be broken, and all monopolies of rank and power come to an end, and so a great change take place in the social condition

of Europe, and especially of England. That change will bring many of the comfortable into the rich class, and eventually many of the miserable into the comfortable class. But I do not expect such a radical change here, where we have not such enormous abuses to surmount.

I think something will be done in Europe for the organization of labor, I do not know what; I do not know how; I have not the ability to know, and will not pretend to criticize what I know I cannot create, and do not at present understand. I think there will be a great change in the form of society; that able men will endeavor to remove the causes of crime, not merely to make money out of that crime; that intemperance will be diminished; that idleness in rich or poor will be counted a disgrace; that labor will be more respected; education more widely diffused; and that institutions will be founded, which will tend to produce these results. But I do not pretend to devise those institutions, and certainly shall not throw obstacles in the way of such as can or will try. It seems likely that something will be first done in Europe, where the need is greatest. There a change must come. By and by, if it does not come peaceably, the continent will not furnish "special constables" enough to put down human nature. If the white republicans cannot make a revolution peacefully, wait a little, and the red republicans will make it in blood. "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must," says mankind, first in a whisper, then in a voice of thunder. If powerful men will not write justice with black ink, on white paper, ignorant and violent men will write it on the soil, in letters of blood, and illuminate their rude legislation with burning castles, palaces, and towns. While the social change is taking place never so peacefully, men will think the world is going to ruin. But it is an old world, pretty well put together, and, with all these changes, will probably last some time longer. Human society is like one of those enormous boulders, so nicely poised on another rock, that a man may move it with a single hand. You are afraid to come under its sides, lest it fall. When the wind blows, it rocks with formidable noise, and men say it will soon be down upon us. Now and then a rude boy undertakes to throw it over; but all the men who can get their shoulders under, cannot raise the ponderous mass from its solid and firm-set base.

Still, after all these changes have taken place, there remains the difference between the strong and the weak, the active and the idle, the thrifty and the spendthrift, the temperate and the intemperate; and, though the term poverty ceases to be so dreadful, and no longer denotes want of the natural necessities of the body, there will still remain the relatively rich and the relatively poor.

But now something can be done directly to remove the causes of poverty, something to mitigate their effects; we need both the palliative charity, and the remedial justice. Tenements for the poor can be provided at a cheap rent, that shall yet pay their owner a reasonable income. This has been proved by actual experiment, and, after all that

has been said about it, I am amazed that no more is done. I will not exhort the churches to this in the name of religion — they have other matters to attend to; but if capitalists will not, in a place like Boston, it seems to me the city should see that this class of the population is provided with tenements, at a rate not ruinous. It would be good economy to do it, in the pecuniary sense of good economy; certainly to hire money at six per cent, and rent the houses built therewith at eight per cent, would cost less than to support the poor entirely in almshouses, and punish them in jails.

Something yet more may be done, in the way of furnishing them with work, or of directing them to it; something towards enabling them to purchase food and other articles cheap.

Something might be done to prevent street beggary, and begging from house to house, which is rather a new thing in this town. The indiscriminate charity, which it is difficult to withhold from a needy and importunate beggar, does more harm than good.

Much may be done to promote temperance; much more, I fear, than is likely to be done; that is plainly the duty of society. Intemperance is bad enough with the comfortable and the rich; with the poor it is ruin — sheer, blank, and swift ruin. The example of the rich, of the comfortable, goes down there like lightning, to shatter, to blast, and to burn. It is marvelous, that in Christian Boston, men of wealth, and so above the temptation which lurks behind a dollar, men of character otherwise thought to be elevated, can yet continue a traffic which leads to the ruin and slow butchery of such masses of men. I know not what can be done by means of the public law. I do know what can be done by private self-denial, by private diligence.

Something also may be done to promote religion amongst the poor, at least something to make it practicable for a poor man to come to church on Sunday, with his fellow-creatures who are not miserable — and to hear the best things that the ablest men in the Church have to offer. We are very democratic in our State, not at all so in our Church. In this matter the Catholics put us quite to shame. If, as some men still believe, it be a manly calling and a noble to preach Christianity, then to preach it to men who stand in the worst and most dangerous positions in society; to take the highest truths of human consciousness, the loftiest philosophy, the noblest piety, and bring them down into the daily life of poor men, rude men, men obscure, unfriended, ready to perish; surely this is the noblest part of that calling, and demands the noblest gifts, the fairest and the largest culture, and the loftiest powers.

It is no hard thing to reason with reasoning men, and to be intelligible to the intelligent; to talk acceptably and even movingly to scholars and men well read, is no hard thing, if you are yourself well read and a scholar. But to be intelligible to the ignorant, to reason with men who reason not, to speak acceptably and movingly with such men, to

inspire them with wisdom, with goodness, and with piety—that is the task only for some men of rare genius who can stride over the great gulf betwixt the thrones of creative power, and humble positions of men ignorant, poor, and forgot! Yet such men there are, and here is their work.

Something can be done for the children of the poor—to promote their education, to find them employment, to snatch these little ones from underneath the feet of that grim poverty. It is not less than awful to think, while there are more children born in Boston of Catholic parents than of Protestant, that yet more than three-fifths thereof die before the sun of their fifth year shines on their luckless heads. I thank God that thus they die. If there be not wisdom enough in society, nor enough justice there to save them from their future long-protracted suffering, then I thank God that Death comes down betimes, and moistens his sickle while his crop is green. I pity not the miserable babes who fall early before that merciful arm of Death. They are at rest. Poverty cannot touch them. Let the mothers who bore them rejoice, but weep only for those that are left—left to ignorance, to misery, to intemperance, to vice that I shall not name; left to the mercies of the jail, and perhaps the gallows at the last. Yet Boston is a Christian city—and it is eighteen hundred years since one great Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost!

I see not what more can be done directly, and I see not why these things should not be done. Still some will suffer; the idle, the lazy, the proud who will not work, the careless who will voluntarily waste their time, their strength, or their goods—they must suffer, they ought to suffer. Want is the only schoolmaster to teach them industry and thrift. Such as are merely unable, who are poor not by their fault—we do wrong to let them suffer; we do wickedly to leave them to perish. The little children who survive—are they to be left to become barbarians in the midst of our civilization?

Want is not an absolutely needful thing, but very needful for the present distress, to teach us industry, economy, thrift, and its creative arts. There is nature—the whole material world—waiting to serve. “What would you have thereof?” says God. “Pay for it and take it, as you will; only pay as you go!” There are hands to work, heads to think; strong hands, hard heads. God is an economist; He economizes suffering; there is never too much of it in the world for the purpose it is to serve, though it often falls where it should not fall. It is here to teach us industry, thrift, justice. It will be here no more when we have learned its lesson. Want is here on sufferance; misery on sufferance; and mankind can eject them if we will. Poverty, like all evils, is amendable to suppression.

Can we not end this poverty—the misery and crime it brings? No, not to-day. Can we not lessen it? Soon as we will. Think how much ability there is in this town—cool, far-sighted talent. If some of the ablest

men directed their thoughts to the reform of this evil, how much might be done in a single generation; and in a century—what could not they do in a hundred years? What better work is there for able men? I would have it written on my tombstone: “This man had but little wit, and less fame, yet he helped remove the causes of poverty, making men better off and better”; rather by far than this: “Here lies a great man; he had a great place in the world, and great power, and great fame, and made nothing of it, leaving the world no better for his stay therein, and no man better off.”

After all the special efforts to remove poverty, the great work is to be done by the general advance of mankind. We shall outgrow this, as cannibalism, butchery of captives, war for plunder, and other kindred miseries have been outgrown. God has general remedies in abundance, but few specific. Something will be done by diffusing throughout the community principles and habits of economy, industry, temperance; by diffusing ideas of justice, sentiments of brotherly love, sentiments and ideas of religion. I hope everything from that—the noiseless and steady progress of Christianity; the snow melts not by sunlight, or that alone, but as the whole air becomes warm. You may in cold weather melt away a little before your own door, but that makes little difference till the general temperature rises. Still, while the air is getting warm, you facilitate the process by breaking up the obdurate masses of ice, and putting them where the sun shines with direct and unimpeded light. So must we do with poverty.

It is only a little that any of us can do—for anything. Still we can do a little; we can each do by helping towards raising the general tone of society: first, by each man raising himself; by industry, economy, charity, justice, piety; by noble life. So doing, we raise the moral temperature of the whole world, and just in proportion thereto. Next, by helping those who come in our way; nay, by going out of our way to help men. In each of these modes, it is our duty to work. To a certain extent each man is his brother's keeper. Of the powers we possess we are but trustees under Providence, to use them for the benefit of men, and render continually an account of our stewardship to God. Each man can do a little directly to help convince the world of its wrong, a little in the way of temporizing charity, a little in the way of remedial justice; so doing, he works with God, and God works with him.

A SERMON OF SLAVERY

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

IN OUR VERSION of the New Testament the word *servant* often stands for a word in the original, which means *slave*. Such is the case in this passage just read, and the sense of the whole verse is this: — “If a man yields unconditional service to sin, he is the *slave* of sin, and gets death for his reward.” Here, however, by a curious figure of speech, not uncommon in this apostle, he uses the word *slave* in a good sense — *slave* of obedience unto righteousness. I now ask your attention to a short sermon of slavery.

A popular definition has sometimes been given of common bodily slavery, that it is the holding of property in man. In a kindred language it is called body-property. In this case, a man’s body becomes the possession, property, chattel, tool, or thing of another person, and not of the man who lives in it. This foreign person, of course, makes use of it to serve his own ends, without regard to the true welfare, or even the wishes, of the man who lives in that body, and to whom it rightfully belongs. Here the relation is necessarily that of force on one side and suffering on the other, though the force is often modified and the suffering sometimes disguised or kept out of sight.

Now man was made to be free, to govern himself, to be his own master, to have no cause stand between him and God, which shall curtail his birthright of freedom. He is never in his proper element until he attains this condition of freedom; of self-government. Of course, while we are children, not having reached the age of discretion, we must be under the authority of our parents and guardians, teachers, and friends. This is a natural relation. There is no slavery in it; no degradation. The parents, exercising rightful authority over their children, do not represent human caprice, but divine wisdom and love. They assume the direction of the child’s actions, not to do themselves a service, but to benefit him. The father restrains his child, that the child may have more freedom, not less. Here the relation is not of force and suffering, but of love on both sides; of ability, which loves to help, and necessity, which loves to be directed. The child that is nurtured by its parent gains more than the parent does. So is it the duty of the wise, the good, the holy, to teach, direct, restrain the foolish, the wicked, the ungodly. If a man is wiser, better, and holier than I am, it is my duty, my privilege, my exaltation to obey him. For him to direct me in

wisdom and love, not for his sake but for my own, is for me to be free. He may gain nothing by this, but I gain much.

As slavery was defined to be holding property in man, so freedom may be defined as a state in which the man does, of his own consent, the best things he is capable of doing at that stage of his growth. Now there are two sorts of obstacles which prevent, or may prevent, men from attaining to this enviable condition of freedom.

These are:

- I. Obstacles external to ourselves, which restrict our freedom; and
- II. Obstacles internal to ourselves, which restrict our freedom.

A few words may be said on the condition to which men are brought by each of these classes of objects.

I. Of the slavery which arises from a cause external to ourselves. By the blessing of Providence, seconding the efforts, prayers, tears of some good men, there is no bodily, personal slavery sanctioned by the law amongst us in New England. But at the South we all know that some millions of our fellow-citizens are held in bondage; that men, women, and children are bought and sold in the shambles of the national Capital; are owned as cattle; reared as cattle; beaten as cattle. We all know that our fathers fought through the War of Independence with these maxims in their mouths and blazoned on their banners: that all men are born free and equal, and that the God of eternal justice will at last avenge the cause of the oppressed, however strong the oppressor may be; yet it is just as well known that the sons of those very fathers now trade in human flesh, separating parent and child, and husband and wife, for the sake of a little gain; that the sons of those fathers eat bread not in the sweat of their own brow, but in that of the slave's face; that they are sustained, educated, rendered rich, and haughty, and luxurious by the labor they extort from men whom they have stolen, or purchased from the stealer, or inherited from the purchaser. It is known to you all, that there are some millions of these forlorn children of Adam, men whom the Declaration of Independence declares "born free and equal" with their master before God and the law; men whom the Bible names "of the same blood" with the prophets and apostles; men "for whom Christ died," and who are "statues of God in ebony"—that they are held in this condition and made to feel the full burden of a corrupt society, and doomed from their birth to degradation and infamy, their very name a mock-word; their life a retreat, not a progress—for the general and natural effect of slavery is to lessen the qualities of a man in the slave as he increases in stature or in years—their children, their wives, their own bones and sinews at the mercy of a master! That these things are so, is known to all of us; well known from our childhood.

Every man who has ever thought at all on any subject, and has at the same time a particle of manhood in him, knows that this state of slavery would be to him worse than a thousand deaths; that set death in

one scale, and hopeless slavery for himself and children in the other, he would not hesitate in his choice, but would say, "Give me death, though the life be ground out of me with the most exquisite tortures of lingering agony that malice can invent or tyranny inflict." To the African thus made the victim of American cupidity and crime, the state of slavery, it will be said, may not appear so degrading as to you and me, for he has never before been civilized, and though the untaught instinct of man bid him love freedom, yet Christianity has not revealed to him the truth, that all men are brothers before God, born with equal rights. But this fact is no excuse or extenuation of our crime. Who would justify a knave in plundering a little girl out of a fortune that she inherited, on the ground that she was a little girl "of tender years," and had never enjoyed or even beheld her birthright? The fact that the injured party was ignorant and weak, would only enhance and aggravate the offense, adding new baseness and the suspicion of cowardice to guilt. If the African be so low that the condition of slavery is tolerable in his eyes, and he can dance in his chains—happy in the absence of the whip—it is all the more a sin, in the cultivated and the strong, in the Christian (!) to tyrannize over the feeble and defenseless. Men at the South with the Bible in one hand—with the Declaration of Independence in the other hand—with the words of Jesus, "Love your neighbor as yourself," pealing upon them from all quarters, attempt to justify slavery; not to excuse, to cloak, or conceal the thing, but to vindicate and defend it. This attempt, when made by reflecting men in their cool moments, discovers a greater degree of blackness of heart than the kidnapping of men itself. It is premeditated wickedness grown conscious of itself. The plain truth of the matter is this: men who wish for wealth and luxury, but hate the toil and sweat, which are their natural price, brought the African to America; they make his chains; they live by his tears; they dance to the piping of his groans; they fatten on his sweat and are pampered by his blood. If these men spoke as plainly as they must needs think, they would say openly: "Our sin captured these men on the African sands; our sin fettered them in slavery; and, please God, our sin shall keep them in slavery till the world ends." This has been thought long enough, it is high time it was said also, that we may know what we are about and where we stand.

Men at the North sometimes attempt to gloss the matter over, and hush it up by saying the least possible on the subject. They tell us that some masters are "excellent Christians." No doubt it is so, estimating these masters by the common run of Christians—you find such on the deck of pirate ships; in the dens of robbers. But suppose some slaveholders are as good Christians as Fénelon or St. Peter; still a sin is sin, though a Christian commit it. Our fathers did not think "taxation without representation" any the less an evil because imposed by "his most Christian Majesty," a king of Christians.

Then, too, it is said, "The slaves are very happy, and it is a great pity to disturb them," that "the whole mass are better fed and clothed, and are troubled with fewer cares, than working men at the North." Suppose this true also, what then? Do you estimate your welfare in pounds of beef; in yards of cloth; in exemption from the cares of a man! If so all appeal to you is vain, your own soul has become servile. The Saviour of the world was worse fed and clothed, no doubt, than many a Georgian slave, and had not where to lay his head, wearied with many cares; but has your Christianity taught you that was an evil, and the slave's hutch at night, and pottage by day, and exemption from a man's cares by night and day, are a good, a good to be weighed against freedom! Then are you unworthy the soil you stand on; you contaminate the air of New England, which free men died to transmit to their children free!

Still further it is said, "The sufferings of slaves are often exaggerated." This may be true. No doubt there have been exaggerations of particular cases. Every slave-owner is not a demon, not a base man. No doubt there are what are called good Christians, men that would be ornaments to a Christian church, among slaveholders. But though there have been exaggerations in details, yet the awful sum of misery, unspeakable wretchedness, which hangs over two millions of slaves is such that eye hath not seen it; nor ear heard it; nor heart conceived of it. It were so if all their masters were Christians in character, in action, still retaining slaves. How much deeper and wilder must swell that wide weltering sea of human agony, when the masters are what we know so many are, hard-hearted and rapacious, insolent and brutal!

This attempt to gloss the matter over and veil the fact, comes from two classes of men.

1. Some make the attempt from a real design to promote peace. They see no way to abate this mischief; they see "the folly and extravagance" of such as propose "dangerous measures," and therefore they would have us say nothing about it. The writhing patient is very sick; the leech more venturesome than skilful; and the friends, fearful to try the remedy, unwilling to summon wiser advice, declared the sick man is well as ever if you will only let him alone! These men mourn that any one should hold another in bondage; they think our fathers were illustrious heroes, for fighting dreadful wars with the parent country rather than pay a little tax against their will, but that this evil of slavery can never be healed; therefore, in the benevolence of their heart, they refuse to believe all the stories of suffering that reach their ears. The imagination of a kind man recoils at the thought of so much wretchedness; still more, if convinced that it cannot be abated. Now these men are governed by the best of motives, but it does not follow that their opinions are so just as their motives are good.

2. But there are others, who are willing to countenance the sin and continue it, well knowing that it is a sin. They would not have it abated.

They tell you of the stupidity of the African; that he is made for nothing but a slave; is allied to the baboon and the ape, and is as much in his place when fettered, ignorant and savage, in a rice field, to toil under a taskmaster's whip, as a New Englander, free and educated, is in his place, when felling forests, planning railroads, or "conducting" a steam-engine. Hard treatment and poor fare, say they, are the black man's due. Besides, they add, there is a natural antipathy between the black race and the white, which only the love of money, or the love of power, on the part of the white is capable of overcoming; that the blacks are an inferior race, and therefore the white Saxons are justified in making them slaves. They think the strong have a right to the services of the weak, forgetting that the rule of reason, the rule of Christianity, is just the other way: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." They would have us follow the old rule, that "they should get who have the power, and they should keep who can." Of this class nothing further need be said save this: that they are very numerous, and quote the New Testament in support of slavery, thus contriving to pass for Christians, and have made such a stir in the land that it is scarce safe to open one's mouth and strip the veil from off this sin.

If some one should come and tell us that a new race of men had been discovered living at the bottom of the sea, who had a government which declared that all men were "born free," and a religion which laid down these excellent maxims: that all men were brothers; that God was no respecter of persons; and that man's chief earthly duty was to love and serve his fellow-mortals, keeping the law God Himself had made for man; we should say, what an admirable government! what a beautiful religion! what a free, religious, and blessed people they must be! "Happy is the people that is in such a case. Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." But if we were told that a part of that nation had seized certain men weaker than themselves, whom their government had declared "free," whom their religion called "brothers" to the best of men; that they held these men in bondage, making them do all their masters' work, and receive no recompense, but a wretched life which they were to transmit to their children; and that in the mean time the other part of the nation looked on, and said nothing against this shameful wrong; they encouraged the crime and lent their wisdom, their wealth, and their valor to support and perpetuate this infamous institution; what should we say? Certainly that these men were liars! Liars before their government! Liars before their God! Such is the fact. This people does not live at the bottom of the sea, but on the firm land, and boasts the name of republic and Christian commonwealth!

The opinion of good and religious men here amongst us seems to be that slavery is a good sin and ought to be abolished as soon as possible; that the talent and piety of the nation cannot be better employed

than in devising the speediest and most effectual way of exterminating the evil. Such of them as see a way to abolish the wrong cry aloud and publish the tidings; others who see no way state that fact also, not failing to express their dread of all violent measures. Such is the conviction of good and religious men at the North. But there is another opinion a little different, which is held by a different class of men at the North; they think that slavery is a great sin, and ought to be kept up so long as men can make money by it. But if the suppression of slavery could be effected—not as our fathers won their freedom, by blood and war—so gently as not to ruffle a sleeping baby's eyelid, yet if it diminished the crop of rice, or cotton, or tobacco, or corn, a single quintal a year, it would be a great mistake to free, cultivate, Christianize, and bless these millions of men! No one, I take it, will doubt this is a quite common opinion here in New England. The cause of this opinion will presently be touched upon. To show what baseness was implied in holding such opinions, would be simply a waste of time.

We all know there is at the North a small body of men, called by various names, and treated with various marks of disrespect, who are zealously striving to procure the liberation of slaves, in a peaceable and quiet way. They are willing to make any sacrifice for this end. They start from the maxim that slavery is sin, and that sin is to be abandoned at once, and for ever, come what will come of it. These men, it is said, are sometimes extravagant in their speech; they do not treat the "patriarchal institution" with becoming reverence; they call slaveholders hard names, and appeal to all who have a heart in their bosoms, and to some who find none there, to join them and end the patriarchal institution by wise and Christian measures. What wonder is it that these men sometimes grow warm in their arguments! What wonder that their heart burns when they think of so many women exposed to contamination and nameless abuse; of so many children reared like beasts, and sold as oxen; of so many men owning no property in their hands, or their feet, their hearts, or their lives! The wonder is all the other side, that they do not go to further extremities, sinful as it might be, and like St. John in his youth, pray for fire to come down from heaven and burn up the sinners, or like Paul, when he had not the excuse of youthful blood, ask God to curse them. Yet they do none of these things; never think of an appeal to the strong arm, but the Christian heart. When a man in this land of ours begins to feel this desperate iniquity and sees the deadness of those around him; the silly game played over his head by political parties and political leaders; the game yet sillier played by theological parties and theological leaders, while the land lies overgrown with "trespasses and sins"—he may be pardoned if he shrieks over human sufferings and human crime; if he cries out and spares not, but wishes he had a mouth in his hands, and a mouth in his feet, and was speech all over, that he might protest in every limb against this abomination which maketh the heart desolate.

There is no doubt that these men are sometimes extravagant! There need be no wonder at that fact. The best of men have their infirmities, but if this extravagance be one of them, what shall we call the deadness of so many more amongst us? An infirmity? What shall we say of the sin itself? An infirmity also? Honest souls engaged in a good work, fired with a great idea, sometimes forget the settled decorum of speech, commonly observed in forum and pulpit, and call sin sin. If the New Testament tell truth, Paul did so, and it was thought he would "turn the world upside down," while he was only striving to set it right. John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth did the same thing, and though one left his head in a charger, and the other his body on a cross, yet the world thinks at this day they did God's great work with their sincerity of speech.

The men who move in this matter encounter opposition from two classes of men; from the moderate, who do not see the wisdom of their measures, and who fear that the slave if set free will be worse off than before, or who think that the welfare of the masters is not sufficiently cared for. These moderate men think "We had better not meddle with the matter at present," but by and by, at a convenient season, they will venture to look into it. Now these moderate men it is not likely would ever think of doing the work until it is all done, yet deserve the gratitude of the public, of the more enthusiastic abolitionists. A balance wheel is useful to a machine; though it renders more force necessary at first to start the machine, it gives it stability and power when once set a-moving. In certain stages of vegetation a chilly day is a most auspicious event.

Then too they encounter opposition from the selfish, who see, or think they see, that the white masters will lose some thousands of millions of dollars, if slavery be abolished! Who has forgotten the men that opposed the introduction of Christianity at Ephesus—the craftsmen that made silver shrines for Diana!

I know some men say, "We have nothing to do with it. Slavery is the affair of the slaveholders and the slaves, not yours and mine. Let them abate it when they will." A most unchristian saying is this. Slavery! we have something to do with it. The sugar and rice we eat, the cotton we wear, are the work of the slave. His wrongs are imported to us in these things. We eat his flesh and drink his blood. I need not speak of our political connection with slavery. You all know what that is, and its effect on us here. But socially, individually, we are brought into contact with it every day. If there is a crime in the land known to us, and we do not protest against it to the extent of our ability, we are partners of that crime. It is not many years since it was said, temperate men had nothing to do with the sin of drunkenness; though they paid for it out of their purse! When they looked they found they had much to do with it, and sought to end it. I have no doubt, to go back to the Hebrew mythical tale, that when God called Cain, "Where is Abel?" he said, "I have nothing to do with it; that is Abel's affair. Am I my

brother's keeper?" If the law of Moses made it the duty of a Hebrew to lift up the beast of a public enemy which had stumbled in the street, how much more does the law of God make it a Christian's duty to tell his brother of his sin, and help him out of it; how much more to rescue the oppressed—"to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Such then is slavery at the South; such the action of men at the North to attack or to defend it. But look a moment at the cause of this sin, and of its defense. It comes from the desire to get gain, comfort, or luxury; to have power over matter, without working or paying the honest price of that gain, comfort, luxury, and power; it is the spirit which would knowingly and of set purpose injure another for the sake of gaining some benefit to yourself. Such a spirit would hold slaves everywhere, if it were possible. Now when the question is put to any fair man—Is not this spirit active at the North as well as the South? there is but one answer. The man who would use his fellow-man as a tool merely, and injure him by that use; who would force another in any way to bend to his caprice; who would take advantage of his ignorance, his credulity, his superstition, or his poverty, to enrich and comfort himself; in a word, who would use his neighbor to his neighbor's hurt—that man has the spirit of slaveholding, and were circumstances but different, he would chain his brethren with iron bonds. If you, for your own sake, would unjustly put any man in a position which degrades him in your eyes, in his own eyes, in the eyes of his fellow-men, you have the spirit of the slaveholder.

There is much of this affair with us still. This is the reason that slavery finds so many supporters amongst us; that we deliver up the fugitives, and "betray him that wandereth," sheltering ourselves under the plea that we keep the law of the land, written by man on parchment half a century ago, while we violate the law of nature, written everlastingly by God on the walls of the world. It was through this spirit—so genial to our Anglo-Saxon blood—that our fathers slew the Indians, who would not work, and the Southern planter enslaves the African, who will work. Both acted from the same motives, at North and South; killing or enslaving. That spirit is still with us, and shows itself in many shapes that need not be touched on now. It is not owing so much to our superior goodness, perhaps, as to a fortunate accident, that we have no slaves here at this day. They are not profitable. The shrewd men of our land discerned the fact long ago, and settled the question. Doubtless we have still social institutions which eyes more Christian than ours shall one day look upon as evils only less than that of slavery itself. But it is gradually that we gain light; he that converts it to life as fast as it comes, does well.

II. Let a word be said on the other kind of slavery; that which comes from a cause internal to ourselves. This is common at the North, and South, and East, and West. In this case the man is prevented from

doing what is best for him, not by some other man who has bound him, but by some passion or prejudice, superstition or sin. Here the mischief is in his own heart. If you look around you, you find many that bear the mark of the beast; branded on the forehead and the right hand; branded as slaves. "He that committeth sin is the slave of sin." The avaricious man is a slave. He cannot think a thought but as his master bids. He cannot see a truth if a dollar intervene. He cannot relieve the poor, nor sympathize with the distressed, nor yield to the humane impulse of his natural heart. If he sees in the newspaper a sentence on the wastefulness or the idleness of the poor, he remembers it for ever; but a word in the Bible to encourage charity – he never finds that.

The passionate man is a slave; he lies at the mercy of the accidents of a day. If his affairs go well he is calm and peaceful; but if some little mistake arise he is filled with confusion, and the demon that rules him draws the chain. This master has many a slave under his yoke. He is more cruel than any planter in Cuba or Trinidad. He not only separates friend from friend, parent from child, and husband from wife, but what is worse yet, prevents their loving one another while they are together. This makes man a tyrant, not a husband; woman a fiend, not an angel, as God made her to be. This renders marriage a necessary evil, and housekeeping a perpetual curse, for it takes the little trifles which happen everywhere, except between angels, and makes them very great matters; it converts mistakes into faults, accidents into vices, errors into crimes; and so rends asunder the peace of families, and in a single twelvemonth disturbs more marriages than all the slaveholders of Carolina in a century.

So the peevish man is a slave. His ill humor watches him like a demon. Ofttimes it casteth him into the fire, and often into the water. In the morning he complains that his caprice is not complied with; in the evening that it is. He is never peaceful except when angry; never quiet but in a storm. He is free to do nothing good; so he acts badly, thinks badly, feels badly – three attributes of a devil. A yoke of iron and fetters of brass were grievous to bear, no doubt; the whip of a taskmaster makes wounds in the flesh; but God save us from the tyranny of the peevish, both what they inflict and what they suffer.

The intemperate man also is a slave; one most totally subjugated. His vice exposes him to the contempt and insult of base men, as well as to the pity of the good. Not only this, but his master strips him of his understanding; takes away his common sense, conscience, his reason, religion – qualities that make a man differ from a beast; on his garments, his face, his wife and child, is written in great staring letters, so that he may read that runs – This man also has sold his birthright and become a slave. The jealous planter forbids his slave to learn; but he cannot take from him the understanding he has got.

This refinement of torture it was left for intemperance to exercise, levelling at once the distinctions between rude and polished.

Bodily slavery is one of the greatest wrongs that man can inflict on man; an evil not to be measured by the external and visible woe which it entails on the victim, but by the deep internal ruin which it is its direct tendency to produce. If I had the tongue of the archangel I could not give utterance to the awfulness of this evil. There is no danger that this be exaggerated—no more than that the sun in a picture be painted too bright. A wise man would do anything within the compass of righteousness, or suffer a hundred deaths, if that were possible, rather than yield himself a slave, to be the tool and chattel of a master who views him as a dog. A religious man will do all within the compass of religion to rescue others from a fate so hard. What we can do for this, then, let us do with faith in Him who brings good out of evil. You and I cannot move multitudes of men, but we can each move one, and so contribute our mite to remove the outward obstacles that oppose the freedom of man.

I know men say that you and I ought not to move in this matter; that we have nothing to do with it. They urge in argument that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land, and that sanctions slavery. But it is the supreme law made by the voters, like the statutes denouncing capital punishment. What voters have made can voters unmake. There is no supreme law but that made by God; if our laws contradict that, the sooner they end or the sooner they are broken, why, the better. It seems to be thought a very great thing to run counter to a law of man, written on parchment; a very little thing to run counter to the law of Almighty God, Judge of the quick and the dead.

Has He sanctioned slavery? "Oh yes," say some, and cite Old Testament and New Testament in proof thereof. It has been said, "The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose." We need not settle that question now, but it is certain that men can quote it to support despotism when that is the order of the day—or freedom when that is the "law of the land"; certain that men defend drunkenness and war, or sobriety and peace, out of its pages. A man finds what he looks for.

Now some tell us that Paul said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," meaning the "law of the land"—"for the powers that be are ordained of God." Did Paul do so? Not at all; he resisted the very religion established by the powers that were. But it will be said, he did not war directly with slavery, yet lived in the midst of slaveholders. Paul had work enough to do, no doubt, without that of abolishing slavery; perhaps he had not his eyes open to this great sin—not seeing it as a sin. This is certain, that he thought the world was to end in his own lifetime, and therefore if he did see the wickedness of the "institution," he may have thought it not worth while to attempt to remove what would so soon perish, at the "coming of the Lord."

But it is said still further, Jesus himself did not forbid slavery in set speech. Did he forbid by name any one of a hundred other vices that might be mentioned? He did not forbid the excessive use of intoxicating liquors in that way. Nay, we are told in the fourth Gospel that he made three or four barrels of wine—of superior quality too—for a single wedding in a little country town, in Cana of Galilee! Does his silence or his alleged action afford any excuse for that sin also? It is a very sad state of mind in which a man can forget all the principles which Jesus laid down, all the spirit of his doctrine and his life, and then quibble about this—that he did not forbid slavery in words! Men that cite him in defense of slavery seem to forget the “Sermon on the Mount”; yes, all of his teachings, and would do well to read for their special edification, what is said to their prototypes in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, and elsewhere.

Bodily slavery, though established by the powers that be, is completely in the hands of the voters, for they are the powers that be, is no more sanctioned by the supreme law of the land than stealing or murder. No enactment of man can make that right which was wrong before. It can never be abstractly right in any circumstances to do what is abstractly wrong.

But that other slavery, which comes from yourself, that is wholly within your power. And which, think you, is the worse, to be unwillingly the slave of a man and chained and whipped, or to be the voluntary slave of avarice, passion, peevishness, intemperance! It is better that your body be forcibly constrained, bought and sold, than that your soul, yourself, be held in thralldom. The spirit of a slave may be pure as an angel’s; sometimes as lofty and as blessed too. The comforts of religion, when the heart once welcomes them, are as beautiful in a slave’s cabin as in a king’s court. When death shakes off the slave’s body, the chain falls with it, and the man, disenthralled at last, goes where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest, where the slave is free from his master; yes, where faithful use of the smallest talent and humblest opportunity has its reward, and unmerited suffering finds its ample recompense. But the voluntary slavery under sin—it has no bright side. None in life; in death no more. You may flee from a taskmaster, not from yourself.

Body-slavery is so bad that the sun might be pardoned if it turned back, refusing to shine on such a sin; on a land contaminated with its stain. But soul-slavery, what shall we say of that? Our fathers bought political freedom at a great price; they sailed the sea in storms; they dwelt here aliens on a hostile soil, the world’s outcasts; in cold and hunger, in toil and want they dwelt here; they fought desperate wars in freedom’s name! Yet they bought it cheap. You and I were base men, if we would not give much more than they paid, sooner than lose the inheritance.

But freedom for the soul to act right, think right, feel right, you cannot inherit; that you must win for yourself. Yet it is offered you at no

great price. You may take it who will. It is the birthright of you and me and each of us; if we keep its conditions it is ours. Yet it is only to be had by the religious man—the man true to the nature God gave him. Without His spirit in your heart you have no freedom. Resist His law, revealed in nature, in the later scripture of the Bible, in your own soul; resist it by sin, you are a slave, you must be a slave. Obey that law, you are Christ's freeman; nature and God are on your side. How strange it would be that one man should be found on all the hills of New England, of soul so base, of spirit so dastardly, that of his own consent took on him the yoke of slavery; went into the service of sin; toiled with that leprous host, in hopeless unrecompensed misery, without God, without heaven, without hope. Strange, indeed, that in this little village there should be men who care not for the soul's freedom, but consent to live, no, to die daily, in the service of sin.

WAR

"The Lord is a man of war" (Exodus 15:3).

"God is love" (1 John 4:8).

I ASK YOUR ATTENTION to "A Sermon of War." I have waited some time before treating this subject at length, till the present hostilities should assume a definite form, and the designs of the Government become more apparent. I wished to be able to speak coolly, and with knowledge of the facts, that we might understand the comparative merits of the present war. Besides, I have waited for others in the churches, of more experience to speak, before I ventured to offer my counsel; but I have thus far waited almost in vain. I did not wish to treat the matter last Sunday, for that was the end of our week of Pentecost, when cloven tongues of flame descend on the city, and some are thought to be full of new wine, and others of the holy spirit. The heat of the meetings, good and bad, of that week, could not wholly

have passed away from you or me, and we ought to come coolly and consider a subject like this. So the last Sunday I only sketched the background of the picture, to-day intending to paint the horrors of war in front of that "Presence of Beauty in Nature," to which, with its meanings and its lessons, I then asked you to attend.

It seems to me that an idea of God as the Infinite is given to us in our nature itself. But men create a more definite conception of God in their own image. Thus a rude savage man, who has learned only the presence of power in nature, conceives of God mainly as a force, and speaks of Him as a God of power. Such, though not without beautiful exceptions, is the character ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament. "The Lord is a man of war." He is "the Lord of hosts." He kills men, and their cattle. If there be trouble in the enemies' city, it is the Lord who hath caused it. He will "whet his glittering sword, and render vengeance to his enemies. He will make his arrows drunk with blood, and his sword shall devour flesh!" It is with the sword that God pleads with all men. He encourages men to fight, and says, "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." He sends blood into the streets; he waters the land with blood, and in blood he dissolves the mountains. He brandishes his sword before kings, and they tremble at every moment. He treads nations as grapes in a winepress, and his garments are stained with their life's blood.

A man who has grown up to read the older Testament of God revealed in the beauty of the universe, and to feel the goodness of God therein set forth, sees Him not as force only, or in chief, but as love. He worships in love the God of goodness and of peace. Such is the prevalent character ascribed to God in the New Testament, except in the book of Revelation. He is the "God of love and peace"; "our Father," "kind to the unthankful and the unmerciful." In one word, God is love. He loves us all, Jew and Gentile, bond and free. All are His children, each of priceless value in His sight. He is no God of battles; no Lord of hosts; no man of war. He has no sword nor arrows; He does not water the earth nor melt the mountains in blood, but "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." He has no garments dyed in blood; curses no man for refusing to fight. He is spirit, to be worshiped in spirit and in truth! The commandment is: Love one another; resist not evil with evil; forgive seventy times seven; overcome evil with good; love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you. There is no nation to shut its ports against another, all are men; no caste to curl its lip at inferiors; all are brothers, members of one body, united in the Christ, the ideal man and head of all. The most useful is the greatest. No man is to be master, for the Christ is our teacher. We are to fear no man, for God is our Father.

These precepts are undeniably the precepts of Christianity. Equally

plain is it that they are the dictates of man's nature, only developed and active; a part of God's universal revelation; His law writ on the soul of man, established in the nature of things; true after all experience, and true before all experience. The man of real insight into spiritual things sees and knows them to be true.

Do not believe it the part of a coward to think so. I have known many cowards; yes, a great many; some very cowardly, pusillanimous, and faint-hearted cowards; but never one who thought so, or pretended to think so. It requires very little courage to fight with sword and musket, and that of a cheap kind. Men of that stamp are plenty as grass in June. Beat your drums, and they will follow; offer them but eight dollars a month, and they will come—fifty thousand of them, to smite and kill. Every male animal, or reptile, will fight. It requires little courage to kill; but it takes much to resist evil with good, holding obstinately out, active or passive, till you overcome it. Call that non-resistance, if you will; it is the stoutest kind of combat, demanding all the manhood of a man.

I will not deny that war is inseparable from a low stage of civilization; so is polygamy, slavery, cannibalism. Taking men as they were, savage and violent, there have been times when war was unavoidable. I will not deny that it has helped forward the civilization of the race, for God often makes the folly and the sin of men contribute to the progress of mankind. It is none the less a folly or a sin. In a civilized nation like ourselves, it is far more heinous than in the Ojibways or the Comanches.

War is in utter violation of Christianity. If war be right, then Christianity is wrong, false, a lie. But if Christianity be true, if reason, conscience, the religious sense, the highest faculties of man, are to be trusted, then war is the wrong, the falsehood, the lie. I maintain that aggressive war is a sin; that it is national infidelity, a denial of Christianity and of God. Every man who understands Christianity by heart, in its relations to man, to society, the nation, the world, knows that war is a wrong. At this day, with all the enlightenment of our age, after the long peace of the nations, war is easily avoided. Whenever it occurs, the very fact of its occurrence convicts the rulers of a nation either of entire incapacity as statesmen, or else of the worst form of treason to the people, to mankind, to God! There is no other alternative. The very fact of an aggressive war shows that the men who cause it must be either fools or traitors. I think lightly of what is called treason against a government. That may be your duty to-day, or mine. Certainly it was our fathers' duty not long ago; now it is our boast and their title to honor. But treason against the people, against mankind, against God, is a great sin, not lightly to be spoken of. The political authors of the war on this continent, and at this day, are either utterly incapable of a statesman's work, or else guilty of that sin. Fools they are, or traitors they must be.

Let me speak, and in detail, of the evils of war. I wish this were not necessary. But we have found ourselves in a war; the Congress has voted our money and our men to carry it on; the governors call for volunteers; the volunteers come when they are called for. No voice of indignation goes forth from the heart of the eight hundred thousand souls of Massachusetts; of the seventeen million freemen of the land how few complain; only a man here and there! The press is well-nigh silent. And the Church, so far from protesting against this infidelity in the name of Christ, is little better than dead. The man of blood shelters himself behind its wall, silent, dark, dead, and emblematic. These facts show that it is necessary to speak of the evils of war. I am speaking in a city whose fairest, firmest, most costly buildings are warehouses and banks; a city whose most popular idol is Mammon, the god of gold; whose trinity is a trinity of coin! I shall speak intelligibly, therefore, if I begin by considering war as a waste of property. It paralyzes industry. The very fear of it is a mildew upon commerce. Though the present war is but a skirmish, only a few random shots between a squad of regulars and some strolling battalions, a quarrel which in Europe would scarcely frighten even the pope—you see the effect of it upon trade. Though the fighting be thousands of miles from Boston, your stock falls in the market; the rate of insurance is altered; your dealer in wood piles his boards and his timber on his wharf, not finding a market. There are few ships in the great Southern mart to take the freight of many; exchange is disturbed. The clergyman is afraid to buy a book, lest his children want bread. It is so with all departments of industry and trade. In war the capitalist is uncertain and slow to venture, so the laborer's hand will be still, and his child ill clad and hungry.

In the late war with England, many of you remember the condition of your fisheries, of your commerce; how the ships lay rotting at the wharf. The dearness of cloth, of provisions, flour, sugar, tea, coffee, salt; the comparative lowness of wages, the stagnation of business, the scarcity of money, the universal sullenness and gloom—all this is well remembered now. So is the ruin it brought on many a man.

Yet but few weeks ago some men talked boastingly of a war with England. There are some men who seem to have no eyes nor ears, only a mouth; whose chief function is talk. Of their talk I will say nothing; we look for dust in dry places. But some men thus talked of war, and seemed desirous to provoke it, who can scarce plead ignorance, and I fear not folly, for their excuse. I leave such to the just resentment sure to fall on them from sober, serious men, who dare to be so unpopular as to think before they speak, and then say what comes of thinking. Perhaps such a war was never likely to take place, and now, thanks to a few wise men, all danger thereof seems at an end. But suppose it had happened—what would become of your commerce, of your fishing-smacks on the banks or along the shore? what

of your coasting vessels, doubling the headlands all the way from the St. John to the Nueces? what of your whale-ships in the Pacific? what of your Indiamen, deep freighted with oriental wealth? what of that fleet which crowds across the Atlantic sea, trading with East and West, and North and South? I know some men care little for the rich, but when the owners keep their craft in port, where can the hands find work, or their mouths find bread? The shipping of the United States amounts nearly to 2,500,000 tons. At \$40 a ton, its value is nearly \$100,000,000. This is the value only of those sea-carriages; their cargoes I cannot compute. Allowing one sailor for every twenty tons burden, here will be 125,000 seamen. They and their families amount to 500,000 souls. In war, what will become of them? A capital of more than \$13,000,000 is invested in the fisheries of Massachusetts alone. More than 19,000 men find profitable employment therein. If each man have but four others in his family, a small number for that class, here are more than 95,000 persons in this State alone, whose daily bread depends on this business. They cannot fish in troubled waters, for they are fishermen, not politicians. Where could they find bread or cloth in time of war? In Dartmoor prison? Ask that of your demagogues who courted war! . . .

Then your soldier is the most unprofitable animal you can keep. He makes no railroads; clears no land; raises no corn. No, he can make neither cloth nor clocks! He does not raise his own bread, mend his own shoes, make his shoulder-knot of glory, nor hammer out his own sword. Yet he is a costly animal, though useless. If the President gets his fifty thousand volunteers, a thing likely to happen — for though Irish lumpers and hodmen want a dollar or a dollar and a half a day, your free American of Boston will enlist for twenty-seven cents, only having his livery, his feathers, and his glory thrown in — then at \$8 a month, their wages amount to \$400,000 a month. Suppose the present Government shall actually make advantageous contracts and the subsistence of the soldier cost no more than in England, or \$17 a month, this amounts to \$850,000. Here are \$1,250,000 a month to begin with. Then, if each man would be worth a dollar a day at any productive work, and there are 26 work-days in the month, here are \$1,300,000 more to be added, making \$2,550,000 a month for the new army of occupation. This is only for the rank and file of the army. The officers, the surgeons, and the chaplains, who teach the soldiers to *wad* their muskets with the leaves of the Bible, will perhaps cost as much more; or, in all, something more than \$5,000,000 a month. This of course does not include the cost of their arms, tents, ammunition, baggage, horses, and hospital stores, nor the 65,000 gallons of whiskey which the Government has just advertised for. What do they give in return? They will give us three things, valor, glory, and — talk; which, as they are not in the price current, I must estimate as I can, and set them all down in one figure = 0; not worth the whiskey they cost.

New England is quite a new country. Seven generations ago it was a wilderness; now it contains about 2,500,000 souls. If you were to pay all the public debts of these States, and then, in fancy, divide all the property therein by the population, young as we are, I think you would find a larger amount of value for each man than in any other country in the world, not excepting England. The civilization of Europe is old; the nations old, England, France, Spain, Austria, Italy, Greece; but they have wasted their time, their labor, and their wealth in war, and so are poorer than we upstarts of a wilderness. We have fewer fleets, forts, cannon, and soldiers for the population, than any other Christian country in the world. This is one main reason why we have no national debt; why the women need not toil in the hardest labor of the fields, the quarries, and the mines; this is the reason that we are well fed, well clad, well housed; this is the reason that Massachusetts can afford to spend \$1,000,000 a year for her public schools. War, wasting a nation's wealth, depresses the great mass of the people, but serves to elevate a few to opulence and power. Every despotism is established and sustained by war. This is the foundation of all the aristocracies of the old world, aristocracies of blood. Our famous men are often ashamed that their wealth was honestly got by working, or peddling, and foolishly copy the savage and bloody emblems of ancient heraldry in their assumed coats of arms—industrious men seeking to have a griffin on their seal! Nothing is so hostile to a true democracy as war. It elevates a few, often bold, bad men, at the expense of the many, who pay the money and furnish the blood for war.

War is a most expensive folly. The Revolutionary War cost the general Government, directly and in specie, \$135,000,000. It is safe to estimate the direct cost to the individual States also at the same sum, \$135,000,000; making a total of \$270,000,000. Considering the interruption of business, the waste of time, property and life, it is plain that this could not have been a fourth part of the whole. But suppose it was a third, then the whole pecuniary cost of the war would be \$810,000,000. At the beginning of the Revolution the population was about 3,000,000; so that war, lasting about eight years, cost \$270 for each person. To meet the expenses of the war each year there would have been required a tax of \$33.75 on each man, woman, and child. . . .

Now all these sums are to be paid by the people, "the dear people," whom our republican demagogues love so well, and for whom they spend their lives, rising early, toiling late; those self-denying heroes, those sainted martyrs of the republic, eating the bread of carefulness for them alone! But how are they to be paid? By a direct tax levied on all the property of the nation, so that the poor man pays according to his little, and the rich man in proportion to his much, each knowing when he pays and what he pays for? No such thing; nothing like it. The people must pay, and not know it; must be deceived a little, or they would not pay after this fashion! You pay for it in every pound of

sugar, copper, coal, in every yard of cloth; and if the counsel of some lovers of the people be followed, you will soon pay for it in each pound of coffee and tea. In this way the rich man always pays relatively less than the poor; often a positively smaller sum.

Even here I think that three-fourths of all the property is owned by one-fourth of the people, yet that three-fourths by no means pays a third of the national revenue. The tax is laid on things men cannot do without—sugar, cloth, and the like. The consumption of these articles is not in proportion to wealth, but persons. Now the poor man, as a general rule, has more children than the rich; and the tax being more in proportion to persons than property, the poor man pays more than the rich. So a tax is really laid on the poor man's children to pay for the war which makes him poor and keeps him poor. I think your captains and colonels, those sons of thunder and heirs of glory, will not tell you so. They tell you so! They know it! Poor brothers, how could they? I think your party newspapers, penny or pound, will not tell you so; nor the demagogues, all covered with glory and all forlorn, who tell the people when to hurrah, and for what! But if you cipher the matter out for yourself you will find it so, and not otherwise. Tell the demagogues, Whig or Democrat, that. It was an old Roman maxim, "The people wished to be deceived; let them." Now it is only practised on; not repeated—in public.

Let us deal justly even with war, giving that its due. There is one class of men who find their pecuniary advantage in it. I mean army contractors, when they chance to be favorites of the party in power; men who let steamboats to lie idle at \$500 a-day. This class of men rejoice in a war. The country may become poor, they are sure to be rich. Yet another class turn war to account, get the glory, and become important in song and sermon. I see it stated in a newspaper that the Duke of Wellington has received, as gratuities for his military services, \$5,400,000, and \$40,000 a year in pensions!

But the waste of property is the smallest part of the evil. The waste of life in war is yet more terrible. Human life is a sacred thing. Go out into the lowest street of Boston; take the vilest and most squalid man in that miserable lane, and he is dear to some one. He is called brother; perhaps husband; it may be, father; at least, son. A human heart, sadly joyful, beat over him before he was born. He has been pressed fondly to his mother's arms. Her tears and her smiles have been for him; perhaps also her prayers. His blood may be counted mean and vile by the great men of the earth, who love nothing so well as the dear people, for he has no "coat of arms," no liveried servant to attend him, but it has run down from the same first man. His family is ancient as that of the most long-descended king. God made him; made this splendid universe to wait on him and teach him; sent His Christ to save him. He is an immortal soul. Needlessly to spill that man's blood is an awful sin. It will cry against you out of the ground—Cain!

where is thy brother? Now in war you bring together 50,000 men like him on one side, and 50,000 of a different nation on the other. They have no natural quarrel with one another. The earth is wide enough for both; neither hinders the sun from the other. Many come unwillingly; many not knowing what they fight for. It is but accident that determines on which side the man shall fight. The cannons pour their shot—round, grape, canister; the howitzers scatter their bursting shells; the muskets rain their leaden death; the sword, the bayonet, the horse's iron hoof, the wheels of the artillery, grind the men down into trodden dust. There they lie, the two masses of burning valor, extinguished, quenched, and grimly dead, each covering with his body the spot he defended with his arms. They had no quarrel: yet they lie there, slain by a brother's hand. It is not old and decrepit men, but men of the productive age, full of lusty life.

But it is only the smallest part that perish in battle. Exposure to cold, wet, heat; unhealthy climates, unwholesome food, rum, and forced marches, bring on diseases which mow down the poor soldiers worse than musketry and grape. Others languish of wounds, and slowly procrastinate a dreadful and tenfold death. Far away, there are widows, orphans, childless old fathers, who pore over the daily news to learn at random the fate of a son, a father, or a husband. They crowd disconsolate into the churches, seeking of God the comfort men took from them, praying in the bitterness of a broken heart, while the priest gives thanks for "a famous victory," and hangs up the bloody standard over his pulpit!

When ordinary disease cuts off a man, when he dies at his duty, there is some comfort in that loss. "It was the ordinance of God," you say. You minister to his wants; you smooth down the pillow for the aching head; your love beguiles the torment of disease, and your own bosom gathers half the darts of death. He goes in his time, and God takes him. But when he dies in such a war, in battle, it is man who has robbed him of life. It is a murderer that is butchered. Nothing alleviates that bitter, burning smart.

Others not slain are maimed for life. This has no eyes; that no hands; another no feet nor legs. This has been pierced by lances, and torn with the shot, till scarce anything human is left. The wreck of a body is crazed with pains God never meant for man. The mother that bore him would not know her child. Count the orphan asylums in Germany and Holland; go into the hospital at Greenwich, that of the invalids in Paris, you see the "trophies" of Napoleon and Wellington. Go to the arsenal at Toulon, see the wooden legs piled up there for men now active and whole, and you will think a little of the physical horrors of war. . . .

Here, too, the burden of battle falls mainly on the humble class. They pay the great tribute of money; they pay also the horrid tax of blood. It was not your rich men who fought even the Revolution; not

they. Your men of property and standing were leaguings with the British, or fitting out privateers when that offered a good investment, or buying up the estates of more consistent Tories; making money out of the nation's dire distress. True, there were most honorable exceptions; but such, I think, was the general rule. Let this be distinctly remembered, that the burden of battle is borne by the humble classes of men; they pay the vast tribute of money, the awful tax of blood. The glory is got by a few; poverty, wounds, death, are for the people. . . .

Yet more: aggressive war is a sin; a corruption of the public morals. It is a practical denial of Christianity; a violation of God's eternal law of love. This is so plain, that I shall say little upon it to-day. Your savagest and most vulgar captain would confess he does not fight as a Christian—but as a soldier; your magistrate calls for volunteers—not as a man loving Christianity, and loyal to God; only as governor, under oath to keep the constitution, the tradition of the elders; not under oath to keep the commandment of God. In war the laws are suspended, violence and cunning rule everywhere. The battle of Yorktown was gained by a lie, though a Washington told it. As a soldier it was his duty.

Men “emulate the tiger”; the hand is bloody, and the heart hard. Robbery and murder are the rule, the glory of men. “Good men look sad, but ruffians dance and leap.” Men are systematically trained to burn towns, to murder fathers and sons; taught to consider it “glory” to do so. The Government collects ruffians and cut-throats. It compels better men to serve with these and become cut-throats. It appoints chaplains to blaspheme Christianity; teaching the ruffians how to pray for the destruction of the enemy, the burning of his towns; to do this in the name of Christ and God. I do not censure all the men who serve: some of them know no better; they have heard that a man would “perish everlastingly” if he did not believe the Athanasian creed; that if he questioned the story of Jonah, or the miraculous birth of Jesus, he was in danger of hell-fire, and if he doubted damnation was sure to be damned. They never heard that such a war was a sin; that to create a war was treason, and to fight in it wrong. They never thought of thinking for themselves; their thinking was to read a newspaper, or sleep through a sermon. They counted it their duty to obey the Government, without thinking if that Government be right or wrong. I deny not the noble, manly character of many a soldier—his heroism, self-denial, and personal sacrifice.

Still, after all proper allowance is made for a few individuals, the whole system of war is unchristian and sinful. It lives only by evil passions. It can be defended only by what is low, selfish, and animal. It absorbs the scum of the cities—pirates, robbers, murderers. It makes them worse, and better men like them. To take one man's life is murder; what is it to practise killing as an art, a trade; to do it by thousands? Yet I think better of the hands that do the butchering

than of the ambitious heads, the cold, remorseless hearts, which plunge the nation into war.

In war the State teaches men to lie, to steal, to kill. It calls for privateers, who are commonly pirates with a national charter, and pirates are privateers with only a personal charter. Every camp is a school of profanity, violence, licentiousness, and crimes too foul to name. It is so without sixty-five thousand gallons of whiskey. This is unavoidable. It was so with Washington's army, with Cornwallis's, with that of Gustavus Adolphus, perhaps the most moral army the world ever saw. The soldier's life generally unfits a man for the citizen's. When he returns from a camp, from a war, back to his native village, he becomes a curse to society and a shame to the mother that bore him. Even the soldiers of the Revolution, who survived the war, were mostly ruined for life—debauched, intemperate, vicious, and vile. What loathsome creatures so many of them were! They bore our burden: for such were the real martyrs of that war, not the men who fell under the shot! How many men of the rank and file in the late war have since become respectable citizens?

To show how incompatible are war and Christianity, suppose that he who is deemed the most Christian of Christ's disciples, the well-beloved John, were made a navy chaplain, and some morning, when a battle is daily looked for, should stand on the gun deck, amid lockers of shot, his Bible resting on a cannon, and expound Christianity to men with cutlasses by their side! Let him read for the morning lesson the Sermon on the Mount, and for text take words from his own Epistle, so sweet, so beautiful, so true: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, for God is love." Suppose he tells his strange audience that all men are brothers; that God is their common father; that Christ loved us all, showing us how to live the life of love; and then, when he had melted all those savage hearts by words so winsome and so true, let him conclude, "Blessed are the men-slayers! Seek first the glory which cometh of battle. Be fierce as tigers. Mar God's image in which your brothers are made. Be not like Christ, but Cain who slew his brother! When you meet the enemy, fire into their bosoms; kill them in the dear name of Christ; butcher them in the spirit of God. Give them no quarter, for we ought not to lay down our lives for the brethren; only the murderer hath eternal life!"

Yet great as are these threefold evils, there are times when the soberest men and the best men have welcomed war, coolly and in their better moments. Sometimes a people long oppressed, has "petitioned, remonstrated, cast itself at the feet of the throne," with only insult for answer to its prayer. Sometimes there is a contest between a falsehood and a great truth; a self-protecting war for freedom of mind, heart, and soul; yes, a war for a man's body, his wife's and children's body, for what is dearer to men than life itself, for the unalienable rights of man, for the idea that all are born free and equal.

It was so in the American Revolution; in the English, in the French Revolution. In such cases men say, "Let it come." They take down the firelock in sorrow; with a prayer they go forth to battle, asking that the right may triumph. Much as I hate war, I cannot but honor such men. Were they better, yet more heroic, even war of that character might be avoided. Still, it is a colder heart than mine which does not honor such men, though it believes them mistaken. Especially do we honor them, when it is the few, the scattered, the feeble, contending with the many and the mighty; the noble fighting for a great idea, and against the base and tyrannical. Then most men think the gain, the triumph of a great idea, is worth the price it costs, the price of blood.

I will not stop to touch that question, If man may ever shed the blood of man. But it is plain that an aggressive war like this is wholly unchristian, and a reproach to the nation and the age. . . .

Look through the action of your Government, and your Congress. You see that no reference has been had in this affair to Christian ideas; none to justice and the eternal right. Nay, none at all! In the churches, and among the people, how feeble has been the protest against this great wrong. How tamely the people yield their necks—and say: "Take our sons for the war—we care not, right or wrong." England butchers the Sikhs in India—her generals are elevated to the peerage, and the head of her Church writes a form of thanksgiving for the victory, to be read in all the churches of that Christian land. To make it still more abominable, the blasphemy is enacted on Easter Sunday, the great holiday of men who serve the Prince of Peace. We have not had prayers in the churches, for we have no political archbishop. But we fired cannon in joy that we had butchered a few wretched men half-starved, and forced into the ranks by fear of death! Your peace societies, and your churches, what can they do? What dare they? Verily, we are a faithless and perverse generation. God be merciful to us, sinners as we are!

But why talk for ever? What shall we do? In regard to this present war, we can refuse to take any part in it; we can encourage others to do the same; we can aid men, if need be, who suffer because they refuse. Men will call us traitors: what then? That hurt nobody in '76! We are a rebellious nation; our whole history is treason; our blood was attainted before we were born; our creeds are infidelity to the mother-church; our Constitution treason to our fatherland. What of that? Though all the governors in the world bid us commit treason against man, and set the example, let us never submit. Let God only be a master to control our conscience!

We can hold public meetings in favor of peace, in which what is wrong shall be exposed and condemned. It is proof of our cowardice that this has not been done before now. We can show in what the infamy of a nation consists; in what its real glory. One of your own men, the last summer, startled the churches out of their sleep, by his

manly trumpet, talking with us, and telling that the true grandeur of a nation was justice, not glory; peace, not war.

We can work now for future times, by taking pains to spread abroad the sentiments of peace, the ideas of peace, among the people in schools, churches—everywhere. At length we can diminish the power of the national Government, so that the people alone shall have the power to declare war, by a direct vote, the Congress only recommend it. We can take from the Government the means of war, by raising only revenue enough for the nation's actual wants, and raising that directly, so that each man knows what he pays, and when he pays it, and then he will take care that it is not paid to make him poor and keep him so. We can diffuse a real practical Christianity among the people, till the mass of men have courage enough to overcome evil with good, and look at aggressive war as the worst of treason and the foulest infidelity.

Now is the time to push and be active. War itself gives weight to words of peace. There will never be a better time till we make the times better. It is not a day for cowardice, but for heroism. Fear not that the "honor of the nation" will suffer from Christian movements for peace. What if your men of low degree are a vanity, and your men of high degree are a lie? That is no new thing. Let true men do their duty, and the lie and the vanity will pass each to its reward. Wait not for the churches to move, or the State to become Christian. Let us bear our testimony like men, not fearing to be called traitors, infidels; fearing only to be such.

I would call on Americans, by their love of our country, its great ideas, its real grandeur, its hopes, and the memory of its fathers—to come and help to save it from infamy and ruin. I would call on Christians, who believe that Christianity is a truth, to lift up their voice, public and private, against the foulest violation of God's law, this blasphemy of the holy spirit of Christ, the worst form of infidelity to man and God. I would call on all men, by the one nature that is in you, by the great human heart beating alike in all your bosoms, to protest manfully against this desecration of the earth, this high treason against both man and God. Teach your rulers that you are Americans, not slaves; Christians, not heathen; men, not murderers, to kill for hire! You may effect little in this generation, for its head seems crazed and its heart rotten. But there will be a day after to-day. It is for you and me to make it better: a day of peace, when nations shall no longer lift up sword against nation; when all shall indeed be brothers, and all blest. Do this, you shall be worthy to dwell in this beautiful land; Christ will be near you; God work with you, and bless you for ever! . . .

There have been dark days in this nation before now. It was gloomy when Washington with his little army fled through the Jerseys. It was a long dark day from '83 to '89. It was not so dark as now; the nation never so false. There was never a time when resistance to tyrants was

so rare a virtue; when the people so tamely submitted to a wrong. Now you can feel the darkness. The sack of this city and the butchery of its people were a far less evil than the moral deadness of the nation. Men spring up again like the mown grass; but to raise up saints and heroes in a dead nation corrupting beside its golden tomb, what shall do that for us? We must look not to the many for that, but to the few who are faithful unto God and man.

I know the hardy vigor of our men, the stalwart intellect of this people. Would to God they could learn to love the right and true. Then what a people should we be, spreading from the Madawaska to the Sacramento, diffusing our great idea, and living our religion, the Christianity of Christ! O Lord! make the vision true; waken thy prophets and stir thy people till righteousness exalt us! No wonders will be wrought for that. But the voice of conscience speaks to you and me, and all of us: the right shall prosper; the wicked States shall die; and history responds her long amen.

What lessons come to us from the past! The Genius of the old civilization, solemn and sad, sits there on the Alps, his classic beard descending o'er his breast. Behind him arise the new nations, bustling with romantic life. He bends down over the midland sea, and counts up his children—Assyria, Egypt, Tyre, Carthage, Troy, Etruria, Corinth, Athens, Rome—once so renowned, now gathered with the dead, their giant ghosts still lingering pensive o'er the spot. He turns westward his face, too sad to weep, and raising from his palsied knee his trembling hand, looks on his brother genius of the new civilization.

That young giant, strong and mocking, sits there on the Alleghanies. Before him lie the waters, covered with ships; behind him he hears the roar of the Mississippi and the far distant Oregon—rolling their riches to the sea. He bends down, and that far ocean murmurs pacific in his ear. On his left are the harbors, shops, and mills of the East, and a fivefold gleam of light goes up from Northern lakes. On his right spread out the broad savannahs of the South, waiting to be blessed; and far off that Mexique bay bends round her tropic shores. A crown of stars is on that giant's head, some glorious with flashing, many-colored light; some bloody red; some pale and faint, of most uncertain hue. His right hand lies folded in his robe; the left rests on the Bible's opened page, and holds these sacred words—All men are equal, born with equal rights from God.

The old says to the young, "Brother, beware!" and Alps and Rocky Mountains say, "Beware!" That stripling giant, ill bred and scoffing, shouts amain: "My feet are red with the Indian's blood; my hand has forged the Negro's chain. I am strong; who dares assail me? I will drink his blood, for I have made my covenant of lies, and leagued with hell for my support. There is no right, no truth; Christianity is false and God a name." His left hand rends those sacred scrolls, casting his Bibles underneath his feet, and in his right he brandishes the Negro-

driver's whip, crying again, "Say, who is God? and what is right?" And all his mountains echo—"Right." But the old Genius sadly says again: "Though hand join hand, the wicked shall not prosper." The hollow tomb of Egypt, Athens, Rome, of every State, with all their wandering ghosts, replies, "Amen."

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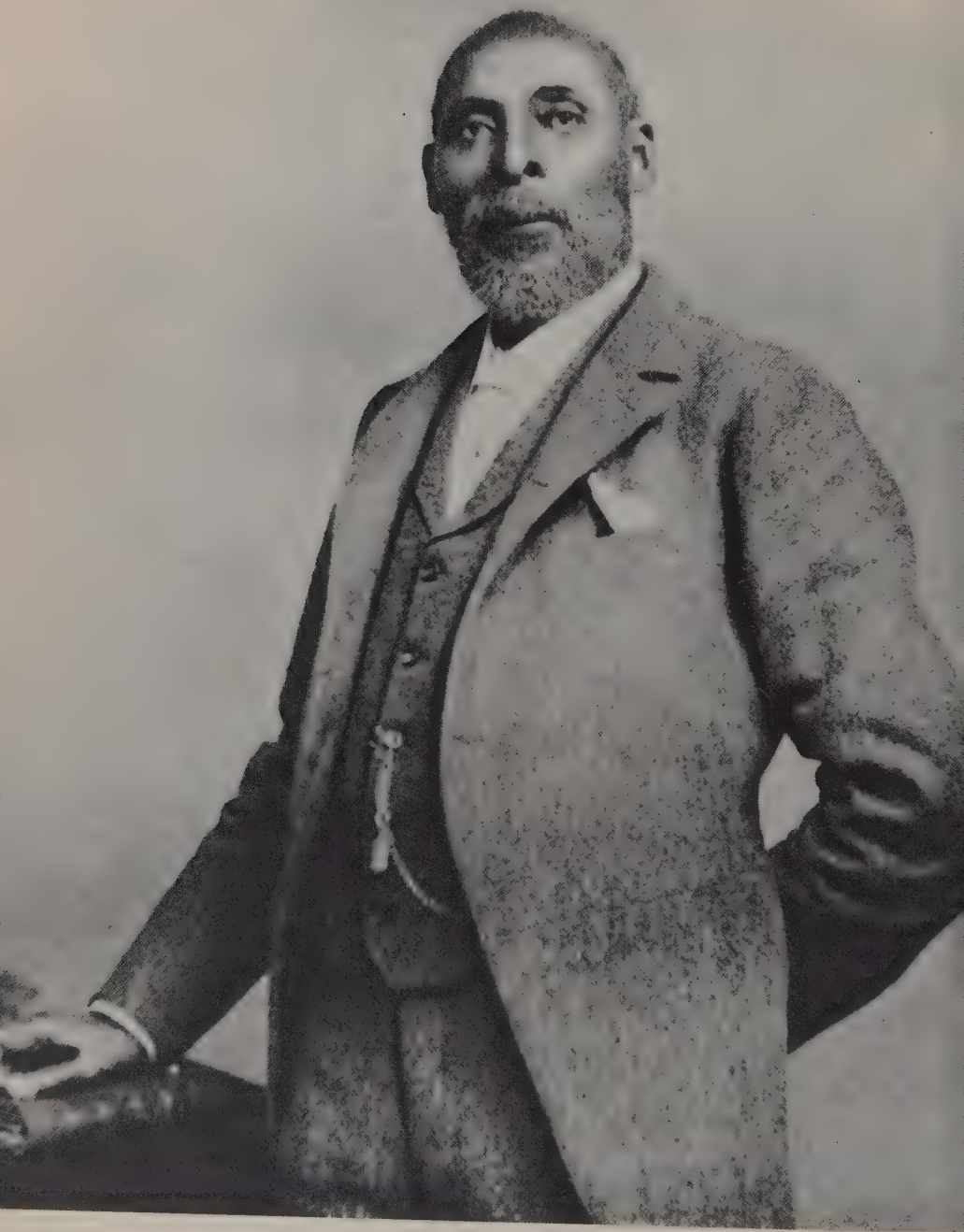
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JOHN JASPER

1812 – 1901



JOHN JASPER, from *John Jasper* by William E. Hatcher
(New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), frontis-
piece.

JOHN JASPER

1812	<i>Born July 4, on Peachy Plantation, Fluvanna County, Virginia</i>
1839	<i>Converted in a dramatic religious experience</i>
1865	<i>Emancipated from slavery</i>
1867	<i>Became pastor of Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia</i>
1878	<i>Preached sermon, "The Sun Do Move"</i>
1901	<i>Died March 28</i>

BORN A SLAVE, John Jasper spent his life setting men free through the gospel. Poor in material possessions, he was rich in things of the spirit. Despised as a black, he led many to love his Lord. Few preachers have experienced the contrasts of John Jasper, famous Negro Baptist preacher.

LIFE AND TIMES

John Jasper was born a slave on the Peachy Plantation on the James River, Fluvanna County, Virginia, in 1812. The twenty-fourth child of his family, he was born two months after his father had died. His father had preaching inclinations—as well as a habit of drinking too much hard liquor. His mother was a Christian and strove to raise all of the children in the nurture of Christ.

His first task as a slave came at the age of eight: as a cart boy, he was to stand before the oxen while the cart was being loaded or unloaded. At the age of ten, he began to wait on tables in the master's house. During his service around the plantation, Jasper learned the manners of Virginia aristocracy. The courtly, dignified manner of the masters often rubbed off on the slaves. When twelve, he was made a gardener. At fifteen

he started work in the tobacco house; his job was to sweep the floor and carry out the trash.

At twenty-two he married Elvy Weaden, a slave girl from a nearby plantation; they spent the night together, and Jasper was missed from his place. He was charged with running away from the plantation. John pleaded that he was not trying to escape but was only getting married. His argument fell on deaf ears. He was separated from his wife and never saw her again. She married another slave a year later. This experience was the beginning of a series of domestic tragedies for Jasper. His second marriage, to Candus Jordan, ended in divorce after they had had a number of children. He married a third wife, Mary Anne Cole, a widow with one daughter, Mary Elizabeth Cole. She died in 1874; they had no children. He married his fourth wife, named Martha, in 1876; they had no children.

The breaking up of his first marriage set John on a wild spree of rebellion. He lashed out against everything in his life and the system in which he was trapped. He was intelligent, strong, and alert, but during this time he drank and smoked excessively.

In 1839 he began to learn to read; a fellow slave taught him. Later this ability to read helped him significantly in his work as a minister. Also in 1839, he experienced a deep religious conversion. Prior to his conversion, Jasper had been seeking God for six weeks. Jasper was twenty-seven years old and was working as a tobacco stemmer (he took the stems out of the tobacco leaves before they were shipped).

Jasper told the story of his conversion in these words:

I was down in Capitol Square in Richmond. Folks were swarming around and laughing and hurraing when all of a sudden God's arrow of conviction went into my proud heart and brought me low. I left there badly crippled.

. . . no one in that factory could beat me at that work. But that morning the stems wouldn't come out to save me, and I tore up the tobacco by the pound and flung it under the table. Fact is, the darkness of death was in my soul that morning. Of all sinners, I was the worst. I thought I was going to die right then, and when I supposed it was my last breath, I flung up a cry, "Oh, Jesus, have mercy on me." Before I knowed it, a light broke in

my heart, I was as light as a feather. I felt like I would just knock the factory roof off with my shouts.¹

Jasper further said of that day:

Oh, that happy day! Can I ever forget it? That was my conversion morning, and that day the Lord sent me out with the good news of the kingdom. For more than forty years I've been telling the story. My step is getting rather slow, my voice breaks down, and sometimes I am awful tired, but still I'm telling it. My lips shall proclaim the dying love of the Lamb with my last expiring breath.

Jasper had a very understanding master, Samuel Hardgrove, who was a member of the First Baptist Church in Richmond and a deacon. All the records indicate that he was a devout Christian. When he heard of Jasper's conversion, he gave him the rest of the day off so that he could share the good news with all of his relatives and friends. He rejoiced in Jasper's experience because he had watched his wildness with deep anguish and had prayed that God would change his life.

Soon after his conversion Jasper began to preach. His first chance came at the funeral of a fellow slave: a white preacher made the mistake of asking Jasper to dismiss the congregation with prayer after his sermon. The record says, ". . . in ten minutes he just hoisted them all up to glory while he was praying. Then when he got through with that prayer, the white people said, 'From now on we want to hear John Jasper.'"² Soon Jasper was in demand for every Negro funeral within traveling distance. His preaching was attended by fainting women, shouting, and general bedlam. Sometimes for hours after the sermon many were still entranced, a few lying about as if they were dead. Jasper preached with such eloquence that the hearers were ready to crown Christ "Lord of All" right then and there.

Jasper was also asked to supply in an old, unpainted pine church in Petersburg. His preaching was so attractive that some of the white ministers began to miss a few of their flock. When told that the people were going to hear a Negro preacher, one of the ministers angrily declared that God did not ordain

1. Richard E. Day, *Holland Foundation Lectures* (Fort Worth: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1952), pp. 42-43.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Negroes to preach. But he attended one of the meetings and upon returning said, "I attended services at John Jasper's church this afternoon . . . Jasper's great! He is the only colored man ever ordained to preach the gospel!"³

After his emancipation, Jasper gathered a congregation and was preaching to several thousand people every Sunday. He was pastor of the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. His appeal extended beyond the Negro community to the white community of Richmond. William E. Hatcher, pastor of the Grace Street Baptist Church of Richmond, often went to hear Jasper preach. Many of the aristocratic families of Richmond criticized Hatcher for this habit; they sniffed, "The Negro's English is horrible." Hatcher replied, "So it is, but I do not go over to listen to Jasper's English. I go over to listen to Jasper talk about his Jesus."⁴ The number of white persons who came to hear Jasper was so large that a section was reserved for them. Jasper often joked with the white listeners, "Now, look'a here, you all white people, you keep over in your section. Don't get in the places of the regular customers."

Jasper's relation to the white man reveals his strong character. As a slave, before his conversion he had deep bitterness toward the whites; he testified that after his conversion he never felt bitter toward them again. At the time of the fall of Richmond to the Union armies, Jasper and all of the other slaves became free men. Mass confusion reigned. Mobs of Negroes invaded the homes of the white people. Jasper opposed these actions; he said, "Richmond has fallen! We are free! But in the name of God, let us act like men!"⁵ Jasper has been deeply appreciated both by the Negroes and by the whites in his area. As evidence of their esteem, loving friends erected a stately monument to his memory not far from the site of the Sixth Mount Zion Church in Richmond.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

The preaching of John Jasper is unique in the history of the Christian faith. He lived the life of a slave forty years before

3. Richard E. Day, *Rhapsody in Black* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1953), p. 74.

4. Day, *Lectures*, p. 39.

5. Day, *Rhapsody*, p. 79.

the Civil War and the life of a free man for forty years after it. He was the last of the ante-bellum Negro preachers of the old style; and although he developed remarkably after the war, Jasper was never really a part of the new age. He was steeped in the traditions and customs of the old South; if anything, he opposed the new age and the new ways. Many of his expressions were more of an embarrassment to his Negro brethren than to the white community. Most of the younger Negro preachers regarded him as the typical "Uncle Tom."

That evaluation is not altogether fair, but in any event he was reflecting the only culture he had ever known. And with all of their criticism, none of the younger preachers ever matched Jasper for sheer preaching genius. A spokesman of the Virginia State Historical Society once said of him, "Virginia has produced many great orators, but I count John Jasper the greatest natural orator that our state has ever produced."⁶

What was his preaching like? It was like nothing ever produced in the Christian pulpit. To be sure, there were many other Negro preachers of the old sort but Jasper was the most original, dramatic, and effective orator of them all. William Hatcher, pastor of the Grace Street Baptist Church in Richmond and a contemporary of Jasper, described his preaching:

Shades of our Anglo-Saxon fathers! Did mortal lips ever gush with such torrents of horrible English! Hardly a word came out clothed and in its right mind. And gestures! He circled around the pulpit with his ankle in his hand; and laughed and sang and shouted and acted about a dozen characters within the space of three minutes. Meanwhile, in spite of these things, he was pouring out a gospel sermon, red hot, full of love, full of invective, full of tenderness, full of bitterness, full of tears, full of every passion that ever flamed in the human breast.

He was a theater within himself, with the stage crowded with actors. He was a battlefield; himself the general, the staff, the officers, the common soldiery, the thundering artillery and the rattling musketry. He was the preacher; likewise the church and the choir and the deacons and the congregation.⁷

6. Day, *Lectures*, p. 44.

7. William E. Hatcher, *John Jasper* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), p. 9.

The essential genius of Jasper's preaching was his gift for description; he had an amazing imagination and utilized it fully. He was a matchless scene painter. Language itself was of secondary importance. Hatcher described him: "His vocabulary was poverty itself, his grammar a riot of errors, his pronunciation a dialectic wreck, his gestures wild and unmeaning, his grunts and heavings terrible to hear." At times Jasper hardly talked at all but simply "emitted"; his listeners were scarcely conscious of words at all, only the total portrayal of the gospel story through the vibrant presence of John Jasper. Many of his sermons were largely composed of a series of pictures from beginning to end. His imagination never tired.

For all of his gifts of description, however, Jasper worked hard at his sermons. He struggled to develop his imagination, to picture with words and actions the things that he felt. Sometimes his sermons were not so descriptive, and then he could be dull. There were long passages in his sermons when he seemed void of color or life—but then, suddenly, perhaps just before the end, a picture would spark his imagination; and he was off, whirling about the pulpit, stalking back and forth across the platform, smiling and bowing, describing the glories of heaven or the grace of King Jesus. He might spend five minutes or more without speaking a word as he did when he portrayed a Christian entering the Kingdom of Heaven and greeting all of the assembled saints and prophets, shaking hands with each one. Lost in a rapture of delight and child-like wonder, his face was a perfect mirror of the joy of his soul—climaxing in a grand moment, when it was apparent to everyone in the place, without a word being spoken, that Jasper had just caught sight of the King upon his throne. And when he knelt down before that imaginary throne, clasped his hands, and looked up into that face which he longed to see, any thought of theatrics was gone; a rapt hush fell upon the throng, and every soul felt itself lifted up with Jasper into the "heavenlies."

No one could have succeeded—not even in those days—with such a method, unless he was known to be a man of integrity. Others might question Jasper's judgment, his theology, especially his knowledge of science—but no one ever questioned his integrity. He believed in paying his debts, and he paid them. Even many of his brethren who scorned him for his old ways said that it was like a revival just to meet John Jasper on the street. The skeptics who came to hear him—and there were

many, especially after his fame—went away convinced: not convinced of his learning, nor of his biblical interpretation; but convinced of his utter sincerity, and frequently, convinced of a surprising depth of wisdom in Jasper which they had not expected.

Jasper was not a sermon maker; he did not write his sermons and he had absolutely no knowledge of homiletics. Most of his sermons were biographical or historical narratives, such as "Joseph and His Brethren" or "Daniel in the Lions' Den" or "The Raising of Lazarus." He also had many sermons for special occasions or special days in the year, and he did not hesitate to preach these over and over again in his own church as well as elsewhere. But many of his sermons were devoted to the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures, and he particularly delighted in preaching on these subjects. The last sermon Jasper ever preached was on regeneration.

Jasper was particularly known as a funeral preacher; in fact, any funeral sermon that did not come up to the standard of a "Jasper sermon" was considered an absolute failure. There is an interesting reason behind his emphasis upon funeral preaching. Jasper began to preach in 1839, and that was twenty-five years before the coming of freedom for the slaves. For a quarter of a century he was a preacher while yet a slave. His time belonged to his master, and he could preach only under very serious limitations: he could only preach when his master permitted him, and then only when some white minister or committee was present to see that things were conducted as they should be.

These opportunities to preach were not frequent, but there was one occasion when even the most hardened master could not refuse a preaching service to the slaves—at the death of one of their number. But they neither expected nor wanted a funeral service at the time of burial. On the contrary, the burial was one thing, the funeral service another. They insisted that the funeral service should be planned for weeks in advance, that one of their own brethren should preach it, and that they should be allowed to indulge their emotions freely. These demonstrations were a tribute to the worth of their dead; but more than that, they provided an opportunity for social contact with one another. The funeral was usually an all-day affair, frequently held in a grove, and the whole affair allowed the slaves to vent their pent-up grief. Jasper was the acknowledged

master of these occasions, and his later oratorical gifts were primarily developed in this setting of grief and fellowship, of dramatic pageantry and social contact.

Jasper may have known nothing of formal homiletics, but he understood many of the principles of successful communication. He observed his audiences closely; he was never oblivious to his surroundings. Hatcher said:

His heart was up towards the throne, and his soul was crying for strength, but his eye was open to the scene before him. The sight of the audience intoxicated him; the presence of notable people caught his gaze and gladdened him; tokens of appreciation cheered him, and he paid good price in the way of smiles and glances to those who showed that he was doing them good.⁸

Jasper was also effective in his use of the pause in his sermons. After particularly dramatic statements, or before them, or between the scenes he was describing, or before particularly significant words, Jasper paused; and when he paused, it seemed that he would never begin again; his audience drew in its breath and waited, while Jasper drew himself up to his full height and then, only then, when the moment was fully captured—he exploded into the next part of his message.

In his early days of preaching Jasper's speech was atrociously ungrammatical. His dialect was fascinating but nearly impossible to understand. During his lengthy preaching career much of this problem disappeared. Toward the end of his life Jasper could speak with grammatical accuracy and even a certain elegance; but he never completely abandoned his dialect, and in his most dramatic passages he delighted in returning to it.

It would be a mistake to think of Jasper as nothing more than a typical shouting, ranting preacher, colorful but incoherent. Nothing could be further from the truth. His presentations were entirely logical: they might not be factual, but they were logical. Given his premise, Jasper proceeded with a crafty logic to establish precisely his conclusion. He had an excellent knowledge of the Bible gained in long years of painstaking study, and his sermons were full of biblical illustrations and quotations.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

His best-known sermon, "The Sun Do Move," was the source of much of his fame. Jasper was not given to sensational preaching in the usual sense of that term, and it is unfortunate that he has been remembered principally for a sermon that was not typical. Two members of his congregation had fallen into an argument over whether the sun moved around the earth; they honestly believed that Jasper was capable of settling any question—on the earth or out of it—and asked his opinion. His answer was contained in his sermon: the Bible referred many times to the sun moving about the earth, and for Jasper that settled the question.

The preaching of the sermon created a sensation. People packed into his church until no more could stand and crowds gathered outside. He preached that sermon more than 250 times in his life, never without great crowds. Many came to be amused by his primitive view of the universe, but they got far more than that. They saw the genius of his preaching, the earnestness of his simple biblical faith, the captivating gift of his humor and satire. It was not that sermon that made Jasper famous—no, it was only the event which triggered his fame—it was the preaching of Jasper, the incredibly gifted Negro preacher, that captivated the great crowds.

A skeptical reporter of that time who regarded Jasper as nothing more than a cheap entertainer came to hear "The Sun Do Move." His final evaluation of the effect of the sermon upon him was typical of many others:

Through it all, I kept on believing in the rotation of the earth, just as I had before, and I really thought before I got there that I would get enough fun out of the occasion to supply me for scores of Sundays. The curious result of it all was that Jasper didn't convert me to his theory, nor did he convert me to his religion, but he did convert me to himself. I found myself turning to him with respect and kindness of feeling that greatly surprised me. I felt his greatness. I believed in his sincerity. . . .

I must make an admission. In the triumph of his ending Jasper polled his crowd to see how his theory was prospering. He made everybody who really endorsed his theory that the sun moved to show the hand. I stretched up my arm about four feet, and would have punched the ceiling with my fingers if it could have

been done. . . . My vote was in favour of Jasper's logic, his genuineness, his originality, his philosophic honesty, and his religion.⁹

When John Jasper died, the *Richmond Dispatch* carried a lengthy article on the great Negro preacher. The paper denied that his fame resulted from his opposition to scientists or his antiquated notions of the universe. His greatness was attributed to his "devout Christian character," "his implicit trust in the Bible," and his sincerity: "no man could talk with him in private, or listen to him from the pulpit, without being thoroughly convinced of that fact." The final paragraph of that article summarized his unique ministry:

John Jasper became famous by accident, but he was a most interesting man apart from his solar theory. He was a man of deep convictions, a man with a purpose in life, a man who earnestly desired to save souls for heaven. He followed his divine calling with faithfulness, with determination, as far as he could, to make the ways of his God known to men, his saving help among all nations. And the Lord poured upon his servant, Jasper, "the continual dew of his blessing."

These sermons by John Jasper have been published in dialect, the only form in which they were originally recorded, to retain the language in which Jasper spoke. They have been modernized in spelling only to the extent of aiding the contemporary reader.

9. Ibid., pp. 170-71.

Sermons

A PICTURE OF HEAVEN

(The funeral of William Ellyson and Mary Barnes)

1 Corinthians 15:55

LEMME SAY A WORD about this William Ellyson. I say it the first and get it off my mind. William Ellyson was no good man—he didn't say he was; he didn't try to be good, and they tell me he die as he live, 'out God and 'out hope in the world. It's a bad tale to tell on 'em, but he fix the story hisself. As the tree falls there must it lay. If you wants folks who live wrong to be preached and sung to glory, don't bring 'em to Jasper. God comfort the monur and warn the unruly.

But, my brethren, Mary Barnes was different. She were washed in the blood of the Lamb and walked in white; her religion was of God. You could trust Mary anywhere; never cotch her in them playhouses nor friskin' in them dances; she wan' no streetwalker trapsin' roun' at night. She love the house of the Lord; her feet clung to the straight and narrow path; I know'd her. I seen her at the prayer meetin'—seed her at the supper—seed her at the preachin', and seed her tendin' the sick and helpin' the mournin' sinners. Our Sister Mary, good-bye. Your race is run, but your crown is sure.

Grave! Grave! Oh Grave! Where's your victory? I heard you got a mighty banner down there, and you terrorizes everybody what comes 'long this way. Bring out your armies and furl forth your banners of victory. Show your hand and let 'em see what you can do. Ain't got no victory now; had victory, but King Jesus passed through this country and tord my banners down. He says His people shan't be troubled no more forever; and He tell me to open the gates and let 'em pass on their way to glory.

Oh, my God, did you hear that? My Master Jesus done jerked the sting of death, done broke the scepter of the king of terrors, and He done gone into the grave and rob it of its victorious banners, and fixed nice and smooth for His people to pass through. More en that, He has

Newly revised by Clyde E. Fant, Jr., from *John Jasper* by William E. Hatcher (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908) and from some newspaper accounts.

writ a song, a shoutin' anthem for us to sing when we go through, passin' suns and stars, and singing that song, "Thanks be unto God—be unto God who give us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ."

My brethren, I often ask myself how I'd behave myself if I was to get to heaven. I tell you I would tremble for the consequences. Even now when I gets a glimpse—just a peep into the palace of the King, it fairly runs me ravin' 'stracted. What will I do if I gets there? I 'spec I'll make a fool of myself, 'cause I ain't got the pretty ways and nice manners my ole Mars' Sam Hargrove used to have, but if I get there they ain't goin' to put me out. Mars' Sam'll speak for me and tell 'em to teach me how to do. I sometimes thinks if I's 'lowed to go free—I 'spects to be free there, I tell you, believe I'll just do the town—walkin' and runnin' all roun' to see the home which Jesus done built for His people.

First of all, I'd go down and see the river of life. I loves to go down to the ole muddy Jemes—mighty red and muddy, but it goes 'long so grand and quiet like 'twas 'tendin' to business—but that ain't nothin' to the river which flows by the throne. I longs for its crystal waves, and the trees on the banks, and the all manners of fruits. This old head of mine often gets hot with fever, aches all night and rolls on the pillow, and I has many times desired to cool it in that blessed stream as it kisses the banks of that upper Canaan. Blessed be the Lord! The thought of seein' that river, drinkin' its water and restin' under those trees—Oh, what must it be to be there.

After that, I'd turn out and view the beauties of the city—the home of my Father. I'd stroll up them avenues where the children of God dwell and view their mansions. Father Abraham, I'm sure he got a great palace, and Moses, what 'scorted the children of Israel out of bondage through the wilderness and to the edge of the promised land, he must be powerful set up being such a man as he is; and David, the king that made pretty songs, I'd like to see his home, and Paul, the mighty scholar who got struck down out in the 'Mascus road, I want to see his mansion, and all of 'em.

Then I would cut roun' to the back streets and look for the little home where my Saviour's set my mother up to housekeepin' when she got there. I 'spect to know the house by the roses in the yard and the vine on the porch. Look there; mighty sweet house, ain't it lovely? Look there; see that on the door; hallelujah, it's John Jasper. Said He was gwine to prepare a place for me; there it is! Too good for a poor sinner like me, but He built it for me, a turn-key job, and mine forever.

Oh, what must it be to be there!

And now, friends, if you'll 'scuse me, I'll take a trip to the throne and see the King in his royal garments. Oh, what must it be to be there!

My brethren, I done forgot somethin'. I got to take another trip. I ain't visited the ransom of the Lord. I can't slight them. I knows heap

of 'em, and I'm bound to see 'em. Here's Brer' Abel, the first man whar' got here; here's Brer' Enoch whar' took a stroll and straggled into glory; here's ole Ligie, whar' had a carriage sent for 'em and comed a nigher way to the city. Here she is; I knowed she'd get here; why, Mary Barnes, you got home, did you? Oh, what must it be to be there!

WHERE SIN COME FROM?

Genesis 3

AND YOU WANTS to know where sin come from, you say. Why should you be broozin' aroun' with such a question as that? There ain't but one place in the universe of God where you can get any information on this point, and there, I am free to tell you, you can get all that you wish to know, and maybe a good deal more. The place where the knowledge you need can be got is in the Word of God.

I knows what some that have been talkin' 'bout this thing is after. I know the side of the question they is struttin' up on. They say, or they kinder hint, that the Lord God is the author of sin. That's what they is whisperin' roun' this town. They can't fool Jasper; but I tell you the devil is playin' pranks on 'em and will drag 'em down to the pit of hell, if they doan look out mighty quick. The Lord God know'd from the beginnin' that some of these devilish people would bring up this very charge and say that He had 'tended that there should be sin from the beginnin'. He done speak His mind 'bout that thing, and if you look in the first chapter of James you'll find the solemn utterance on this subject and it clears God forever from this base slander. "Let no man say," says the Lord, "when he is tempted that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted of any man, and neither tempts He any man."

Did you hear that? That's the Lord's own words. It 'spressly says that people will be tempted—everybody is tempted; I been havin' my

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temptations all my life, and I has 'em yet, a heap of 'em, and some of 'em awful bad, but you ain't catchin' Jasper of sayin' that God is at the bottom of 'em. If I should say it, it would be a lie, and all is liars when they say that God tempts 'em. The sinner is gettin' towards the worst when he is willin' to lay the blame of his sins on the Lord. Do it if you will, but the curse of God will be upon you when you try to make the Lord God such as you is; and to make believe that the Lord gets off His throne and comes down in the mire and clay of your wicked life and tries to jog and to fool you into sin. I tremble to think of such a thing! I wonder that the Lord doesn't forge new thunderbolts of His wrath and crush the heads of them that charge Him with the folly of human sin.

Some of you would be mighty glad to get God mixed up in your sins and to feel that He is as bad as you is. It just shows how base, how lost, how dead, you'se become. Wouldn't we have a pretty God if He was willin' to get out in the night and go plunegin' down into the horrible and ruinous transgressions in which some men indulge. Let me clear this thing up before I quit it. Bear in mind, that God cannot be tempted of any man. Try it if you choose, and He will fling you into the lowest hell, and don't you dare ever to say, or to think, or to hope that the temptation to the wrong things come to you from God. It do not come from above, but it come out of your foul and sinful heart. They is born there, born of your bad thoughts, born of your hell-born lusts, and they gets strong in you 'cause you don't strangle 'em at the start.

But why should there be trouble 'bout this subject? What does the Bible say on this here matter 'bout where sin come from? We can get the truth out of that book, for it contains the Word of God. Our God cannot lie; He never have lied from the foundation of the world. He is the truth and the life and He never lies.

Now, what do He say concernin' this serious question that is plowin' the souls of some of my brudderin. To the Bible, to the Bible, we'll go and what do we get when we get there? The Bible say that Eve was over there in the garden of Eden one day and that she was there by herself. The Lord made Eve, 'cause it weren't good for Adam to be alone, and it looks from this case that it was not quite safe for Eve to be left at home by herself. But Adam weren't with her; doan know where he was—gone bogin' off somewheres. He better been at home tendin' to his family. That ain't the only time, by a long shot, that there has been the devil to pay at home when the man have gone gaddin' aroun', instead of stayin' at home and lookin' arter his family.

While Eve was saunterin' and roamin' aroun' in the beautiful garden, the ole serpent, dyked up to kill, come gallivantin' down the road and he caught sight of Eve and look like he surprized very much but not sorry in the leas'. Now you mus' know that ole serpent was the

trickies' and the arties' of all the beas' of the field—the ole devil, that's what he was. And what he do but go struttin' up to Eve in a mighty friendly way, scrapin' and bowin' like a fool dead in love.

"How you do?" He tries to be polite, and puts on his sweetes' airs. Oh, that was an awful moment in the life of Eve and in the history of this poor lost world of ours. In that moment the poison eat through her flesh, struck in her blood, and went to her heart. At first she was kinder shame'; but she was kinder lonesome, and she was pleased and tickled to get noticed in that way and so she stayed there instead of runnin' for her life.

"Very well, I thanks you," she say extremblin', "how is you this mornin'?" The serpent fairly shouts with joy. He done got her 'tention and she lek to hear 'im, and he feel he got his chance and so goes on:

"Nice garden you got there," he say in er admirin' way. "You got heap of nice apples over there."

"Oh, yes, indeed," Eve replies. "We got lots of 'em."

Eve spoke these words like she was proud to death 'cause the serpent like the garden. There stood the serpent very quiet till, sudden like, he juk aroun' and he says to Eve:

"Can you eat all the apples you got over there?"

"No, indeed," says Eve, "we can't eat 'em all. We got more'n we can 'stroy save our lives. They gettin' ripe all the time; we have jus' hogsheds of 'em."

"Oh, I didn't mean that," spoke the serpent, as if shocked by not bein' understood. "My point is, is you 'lowed to eat 'em all? That's what I want to know. As to you laws and rights in the garden, does they all suit you?"

For a minute the woman jumped same as if somebody struck her a blow. The cold chills run down her back, and she look like she wan' to run, but somehow the eye of the serpent done got a charm on her. There was a struggle, a regular Bull Run battle, gwine on in her soul at that moment.

"What you ask me that question for?" Eve asked, gaspin' while she spoke. Then the devil look off. He try to be calm and to speak low and kind, but there was a glare in his eyes. "I begs many pardons," he says, "'scuse me, I did not mean to meddle with your private business. I'd better 'scuse myself, I reckon, and try and get along."

"No; doan go," Eve said. "You haven't hurt my feelin's. What you say just put new thoughts in my mind and kinder shook me up at first. But I doan mind talkin'."

"If that be the case," speaks up the devil, quite brave-like, "begs you 'scuse me to ask again if the rules of the garden 'lows you to eat any of them apples you got in the garden? I has my reasons for askin' this."

Eve stood there shiverin' like she freezin' and pale as the marble

tombstone. But arter a good while she pint her hand over to er tree, on the hill on the right, and she tell him, as if she was mighty 'fraid, that there was a tree over there of the Knowledge and of the Distinction, and she say, "The Lord God He tell us we mus' not eat them apples; they poison us, and the day we eat 'em we got to die."

"Oh, my brudderin, weren't times mighty serious then? 'Twas the hour when the powers of darkness was gettin' in and the foundations of human hopes was givin' way. Then it was he get up close to Eve and whisper in her ear:

"Did the Lord God tell you that? Doan tell nobody, but I want to tell you that it ain't so. Doan you believe it. Doan let him fool you! He know that's the bes' fruit in all the garden—the fruit of the Knowledge and the Distinction, and that when you eats it you will know as much as He do. You reckon He wants you to know as much as He do? Na-a-w; and that's why He say what He do say. You go get 'em. They's the choicest fruit in the garden, and when you eats 'em you will be equal to God."

Alas, alas! poor deluded and foolish Eve! It was the moment of her everlastin' downfall. Clouds of darkness shrouds her mind and the evil spirit leap into her soul and locks the door behind him. That deadly day she broke 'way from the God that made her, Eve did, and partook of the fruit that brought sin and ruin and hell into the world.

Poor foolish Eve! In that moment darkness fills her mind, evil leaps into her heart, and she pluck the apple, broke the covenant of God, and ate the fatal fruit what brought death to all our race.

Arter a while, Adam come walkin' up the garden and Eve she runs out to meet him. When he come near she hold up her apple in her hand and tell him it is good to eat. Oh, blind and silly woman! First deceived herself, she turn roun' and deceives Adam. That's the way; we gets wrong, and then we pulls other folks down with us. We rarely goes down by ourselves.

But where was the wrong? Where, indeed? It was in Eve's believin' the devil and not believin' God. It was doin' what the devil said and not doin' what God said. And you come here and ask me where sin come from! You see now, doan you? It come out of the pit of hell where it was hatched 'mong the angels that was flung out of heaven 'cause they disobeyed God. It come from that land where the name of our God is hated. It was brought by that ole serpent, the father of lies, and he bring it that he might fool the woman, and in that way set up on the earth the works of the devil. Sin is the black child of the pit, it is. It come from the ole serpent at first, but it's here now, right in poor Jasper's heart and in your heart; wherever there is a man or a woman in this dark world in tears there is sin—sin that insults God, tears down His law, and brings woes to everybody.

And you, stung by the serpent, with God's wrath on you and your feet in the path of death, askin' where sin come from? You better fly the wrath of the judgment day.

But this is enough. I just took time to tell where sin come from. But my tongue can't refuse to stop to tell you that the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is greater than sin and mightier than hell. It can wash away our sins, make us whiter than the drivin' snow, dress us in redemption robes, bring us with shouts and hallelujahs back to that fellowship with our Father, that can never be broken long as eternity rolls!

THE STONE CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN

Daniel 2:45

I STANDS before you today on legs of iron and none can stay me from preachin' the Gospel of the Lord God. I know well 'nough that the ole devil is mad as a tempest 'bout my bein' here; he knows that my call to preach comes from God, and that's what makes him so mad when he sees Jasper 'scend the pulpit, for he knows that the people is gwine to hear a message straight from heaven. I don't get my sermons out of grammars and rhetorics, but the Spirit of the Lord puts 'em in my mind and makes 'em burn in my soul.

It have always been one of the ways of God to set up men as rulers of the people. You know that God ordains kings and rulers and—what kinder bothers some of us—He don't always make it a p'int to put up good men. You know that our Lord give Judas a place 'mong the twelve, and he turned out to be one of the grandes' rascals under the sun.

Jes' so Nebuchadnezzar was p'inted of the Lord to be king of Babylon—that same robber that took the vessels out of the temple at Jerusalem and lugged 'em away to his own country. That man had one of the powerfulest kingdoms ever known on this flat earth. He ruled over many countries and many smaller kingdoms, and even had under his hands the servants on the plantation and the beasts of the field. He was one of these unlimertid monnuks. He asked nobody no odds, and did jes' what he wanted to do, and I cannot stop to tell you with what a

strong hand and outstretched arm he ruled the people with an iron rod. It come to pass that one time this king that did not fear God (though God had sot him up), had a dream. Dreams is awfully curious things. They used to frighten folks out'n their senses and I tell you they sometimes frighten folks now. I've had many dreams in my day that got mighty close to me. They gravuled into the very cords of my soul, and made me feel like the groun' under my feet was liable to give way any time, and I don't doubt that hundreds of you that hear me now have been frightened and could not eat nor sleep nor work with any peace 'cause you done have strange dreams. You better watch them dreams. In the ancient days the Lord spoke to folks in dreams. He warned them, and I don't doubt that He does that way sometimes now.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream stirred him powerful. He rolled all night and did not sleep a wink. So he sent out and got the magicians and the 'strologers and the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, and they was brought unto him. He tell 'em that he had dreamed a dream that had troubled his spirit. And the Chaldeans asked him what the dream was. The king say that the dream done gone clear out'n him, and he can't catch the straight of it to save his soul. He tell 'em, moreover, that they got to dig up the dream and work up the meanin' too, and that if they don't that he gwine to have 'em cut all to pieces and turn their houses into a dunghill, and then he tell 'em that if they will get the dream back for him and give the explanation he gwine to give 'em nice gifts and put great honors on 'em. It was too much for the Chaldeans. They couldn't dream the king's dream for him, and they come square out and tell Nebuchadnezzar that no man on the earth could show such a matter to the king, and that in their opinion there is no king on the earth that would ask for such a thing from prophet or magician.

Then Nebuchadnezzar got high. He went on a tear and you know when a king gets mad you better get out of his way. He is got the power; and so he up and sent out a decree through all the regions of the kingdom that all the wise men everywhere should be slain. Jes' see what a mad man will do when he get furious mad. They got no more sense than a mad tiger or a roarin' lion. Jes' before the slaughter of the wise men come on, Daniel hear 'bout it, and he asked the king's captain what it was all 'bout and why the king was so hasty, and the captain told Daniel all 'bout it. Daniel brushed hisself up quick and struck out to see the king and ask him to hold up the execution of his bloody prophecy, and he'd promise to 'splain his dream to him. Then Daniel goes off and gets all his Godly friends together and ask 'em to pray to the God of heaven that he and his friends should not perish in the slaughter of the tricksters of that country. One thing the Lord can't do: He can't refuse to answer the cries of His people; and when all that prayin' was gwine on God appeared to Daniel in the night and revealed to him the secret of the king—and what you reckon? When the Lord give Daniel that dream and the interpretation thereof, Daniel

raised a great shout and give thanks to God for what the Lord had done for him. But he didn't shout long, for he had important business to attend to; and very soon he went to the king and carried with him the secret that the king had demanded at the hands of the astrologers and magicians. He told the king right to his face the thing that he had dreamed, and what God meant by it. Truly Daniel did behave hisself before the king in a very pretty and becomin' manner. He tell the king he did not have no more sense than other people, and that he was not prepared to do things that other men could do, but that it was by the power of God that all this matter had been made known to him. He told the king that what he saw was a great image; that the image was bright and splendid and the form of it was terrible; that the head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thize of brass, and his legs of iron and his feet part of iron and part of clay. And he tell the king further that he saw a stone that was cut without hands out'n the mountain and that the stone smote the image upon his feet and broke 'em in pieces, and that the stone that broke the image became a great mountain and filled all the world. Then Daniel—that brave and fearless brother, that never quailed before the mightiest ruler of the earth—faced the king and tell him an orful and a warnin' truth. He say to him, "You is a great king now. You have a mighty country and all power, and thy glory civers the groun'. Man and beast and fowl obey you. You is the head of gold, but arter you will come another kingdom that shall not be like yourn, but still it shall be big and there shall come another kingdom and there shall be a fourth kingdom strong as iron, and this kingdom shall bruise and smash all the other kingdoms."

And then Daniel gets to the big point. He tells the king that the Lord is gwine to set up a kingdom and that in the times to come that kingdom shall crush and consume all the other kingdoms. That shall be the kingdom of God on the earth, and that kingdom shall stand forever and ever. You knows how you saw the stone that was cut out'n the mountain and how that broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, and my God have made known to you, O king, what shall take place in the great hereafter, and this is the dream and the interpretation thereof.

That was a mighty sermon that Daniel preached to Nebuchadnezzar. It ought to have saved him, but it look like it made him worse. The devil got him for that time and he turn right agin the Lord God and sot at nort His statutes and counted His ways unholy.

You know 'bout that image. It was made of gold, and was threescore cubits high and six cubits wide, and 'twas sot up in the plain of Durer, not fer from Babylon. You know a cubit is about eighteen inches, and if you multiply that by threescore cubits you get 1080 inches, which mean that the image was ninety foot high and nine feet broad. So you see Nebuchadnezzar got to be a god maker, and when he got this

great image built he sent out to get all the princes and governors and all the rest of the swell folks to come and bow down and worship that great image that he had sot up. Now this was the great folly and shame of the king. By that deed he defied the Lord God and the wrath of the Lord was stirred agin him.

And now, my brethren, you 'member Daniel told the king that the image that he saw in his dream was himself rulin' over all the other kingdoms. He told him also that that stone that was cut out of the mountain and come rollin' down the craggy sides and broke in pieces the iron, the brass and the clay, that that was the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he tell him, furthermore, that the comin' of the stone to be a great mountain means the growth of the kingdom of our Lord till it shall fill this world and shall triumph over all the other kingdoms. Daniel tell the king that his kingdom was gwine to be taken from him, 'cause he had not feared the God of heaven, and in his folly and crimes he turned away from that God that rules in the heaven and holds the nations of the earth in the palms of His hands. He told him that the kingdom of Satan, that arch enemy of God, was gwine to tumble flat, 'cause that stone cut out of the mountain would roll over Satan's dominions and crush it into flinders.

Glory to God in the highest; that stone cut out of the mountain is a mighty roller. Nothin' can stay its terrible progress! They that fight against Jehovah had better look out—that stone is still rollin' and the first thing they know it will crush down upon 'em and they will sink to rise no more. Our God is a consuming fire, and He will overturn and overturn till the foundations of sin is broken up. You jes' wait a little. The time is fas' rollin' on. Even now I hear my Saviour sayin' to His Father, "Father, I can stay here no longer; I mus' get up this mornin'; I am gwine out to call My people from the field; they have been abused and laughed at and been made a scoffin' long enough for My name's sake. I can stay no longer. My soul cries for My chillun. Gabriel, get down your trumpet this mornin'; I want you to do some blowin'. Blow gently and easy at first, but let My people hear your goldin notes. They will come when I call."

Ah, my brethren, you and I will be there when that trumpet soun's. I don' think I shall be alarmed, 'cause I shall know it is my king marshallin' His people home. It won't frighten you my sisters; it will have the sweetness of Jesus' voice to you; and, oh, how it will ring out that happy mornin' when our king shall come to gather the ransomed of the Lord to himself. Then you shall have a new and holy body, and with it your glorified spirit shall be united, and on that day we shall go in to see the Father and He shall smile and say: "These is My chillun; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; they have come out of great tribulation and they shall be with Me for ever and ever." I 'spect to be there.

"Well, Jasper," you say, "why you 'spect to be there? How you know?" You read the fourteenth chapter of John, will you? "I go to prepare a place for you," and that word is the rule; and so you will see ole John Jasper right there, and King Jesus shall come out to meet us and take us in and show us the mansions that He have prepared for us.

O Lucifer how thou have fallin! You proud ones will find then that your days is over, and you that have despised the chillun of my God will sink down into hell, jes' as low as it is possible to get. You needn't tell him that you have preached in His name, and in His name done many wonderful works. You can't fool Him! He'll frown down at you and say: I don' know you, and I don't want to know you, and I don' want to see you. Get out of My sight forever, and go to your place among the lost.

Ah, truly, it is a mighty stone, been rollin' all these centuries, rollin' today. May it roll through the kingdom of darkness and crush the enemies of God. That stone done got so big that it is higher than heaven, broader than the earth, and deeper than hell itself. But don't be deceived. Don't think that I don't let you off. I got somethin' more for you yet.

You 'member Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They all stubbornly 'fused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. They stood straight up. They wouldn't bend a knee nor crook a toe, and them Chaldeans was watchin' em. That's the way it always is; the devil's folks is always a watchin' us and tryin' to get somethin' on us and to get us into trouble and with too many of us they succeed. They saw that Daniel and his friends would not get down like they done, and up they jumped and away they cut and come to the king.

"Oh, king, live forever," they say. "You know, O king, what you said—that decree that you made, that at the soun' of the kornit, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, the psaltery and the dulcimer and all kinds of music, that everybody should fall down and worship the golden image, and that those that does not fall down and worship should be put in the furnace; and now, oh, king, they say that a lot of those men done refuse. They doan regard you. They hate your Gods and 'spise the image that you sot up."

Course the ole king got mad again and in his fury they brought these three before him. He asked 'em if what he had heard 'bout 'em was so—'bout their not worshipping the golden image. "Maybe you made a mistake," the king say, "but we gwine to have it over again, and if when the band strikes up next time you will get down and worship it'll go easy with you, and if you don't the fires in the furnace will be started quick as lightning and into it every one of you shall go."

These was young men, but, ah, I tell you, they was of the loyal stock. They was jes' as calm as sunrise in the mornin'. They said: "O king, we ain't careful to answer 'bout this matter. If you like to cast us into

the furnace, our God that we serve is able to get us out. We ain't gwine to bow, and we never will bow to your God, and you jes' as well understand."

Right then the men went to heat up the furnace. They was told to heat it up seven times hotter than was the general rule and they had some juntu to tie Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and they took the young men away into the furnace. The heat was so terrible that the flames shot out and set fire to the men that had put the Hebrew chillun in and the poor wretches was burned up, but not a hair of the three young men was singed, and they come out a smilin' and not a blister on 'em from head to foot. They did not even have any smell of fire 'bout their persons, and they look jes' like they jes' come out of dressin' rooms.

Nebuchadnezzar was there, and he say: "Look in that furnace there. We didn't put but three persons in there, did we?" and they told him that was so. Then he turn pale and look scared like he gwine to die and he say:

"Look there; I see four men inside and walkin' through the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," and it look like the king got converted that day, for he lifted up his voice and shout the praise of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Ah, great is this story; they that trust in God shall never be put to confusion. The righteous always comes out conquerors and more than conquerors. Kings may hate you, friends 'spise you, and cowards backbite you, but God is your deliverer.

But I done forget. This ole time religion is not good 'nough for sum folks in these las' days. Some call this kind of talk foolishness, but if that be true then the Bible, and heaven, and these Christians' hearts, is full of that kind of foolishness. If this be ole fogy religion, then I want my church crowded with ole fogies.

What did John see over there in Patmos? He say he saw the four and twenty elders seated 'round the throne of God and castin' their glitterin' crowns of gold at the feet of King Jesus, and he say that out of the throne come lightnin' and thunders and voices and the seven lamps burnin' before the throne of God. And there before the throne was the sea of glass, and 'round 'bout the throne was the four livin' creatures full of eyes before and behind, and they never cease cryin': "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God almighty that died to take away the sins of the world!"

You call that ole fogy. Jes' look away over yonder in the future. Does you see that sea of glass and the saints of God that was all bruised and mangled by the fiery darts of the wicked? I hear 'em singin'! What is their song? Oh, how it rolls! and the chorus is: "Redeemed, redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb." Call them ole fogies, do you? Well you may, for they is been doin' that way from the time that Abel, the first man, a saved soul, told the news of salvation to the angels.

“Well, Jasper, have you got any religion to give way?”

I’s free to say that I ain’t got as much as I want. For forty-five years I been beggin’ for more, and I ask for more in this tryin’ hour. But, bless God, I’s got religion to give way. The Lord have filled my hands with the Gospel, and I stand here to offer free salvation to any that will come. If in this big crowd there is one lost sinner that have not felt the cleansing touch of my Saviour’s blood, I ask him to come today and he shall never die.

THE SUN DO MOVE

Joshua 10:13

’LOW ME TO SAY that when I was a young man and a slave, I knowed nothin’ worth talkin’ ’bout concerning books. They was sealed mysteries to me, but I tell you I longed to break the seal. I thirsted for the bread of learnin’. When I seen books I ached to get into ’em, for I knowed that they had the stuff for me, and I wanted to taste their contents, but most of the time they was barred against me.

By the mercy of the Lord a thing happened. I got a room-feller—he was a slave, too, and he had learned to read. In the dead of the night he give me lessons outen the New York Spellin’ book. It was hard pullin’, I tell you; harder on him, for he knowed jes’ a little, and it made him sweat to try to beat somethin’ into my hard head. It was worse with me. Up the hill every step, but when I got the light of the lesson into my noodle I fairly shouted, but I knowed I was not a scholar. The consequence was I crept ’long mighty tejus, gettin’ a crumb here and there until I could read the Bible by skippin’ the long words, tolerable well. That was the start of my education—that is, what little I got. I make mention of that young man. The years have fled away since then, but I ain’t forgot my teacher, and never shall. I thank my Lord for him, and I carries his memory in my heart.

’Bout seven months after my gettin’ to readin’, God converted my

soul, and I reckon 'bout the first and main thing that I begged the Lord to give me was the power to understand His Word. I ain't braggin', and I hates self-praise, but I boun' to speak the thankful word. I believes in my heart that my prayer to understand the Scripture was heard. Since that time I ain't cared 'bout nothin' 'cept to study and preach the Word of God.

Not, my brethren, that I'se the fool to think I knows it all. Oh, my Father, no! Far from it. I don't hardly understand myself, nor half of the things roun' me, and there is millions of things in the Bible too deep for Jasper, and some of 'em too deep for everybody. I don't carry the keys to the Lord's closet, and He ain't tell me to peep in, and if I did I'm so stupid I wouldn't know it when I see it. No, friends, I knows my place at the feet of my Marster, and there I stays.

But I can read the Bible and get the things whar lay on the top of the soil. Out'n the Bible I knows nothin' extra 'bout the sun. I sees his courses as he rides up there so grand and mighty in the sky, but there is heaps 'bout that flamin' orb that is too much for me. I know that the sun shines powerfully and pours down its light in floods, and yet that is nothin' compared with the light that flashes in my mind from the pages of God's book. But you knows all that. I knows that the sun burns—oh, how it did burn in them July days. I tell you he cooked the skin on my back many a day when I was hoein' in the corn field. But you knows all that, and yet that is nothin' der to the divine fire that burns in the souls of God's chillun. Can't you feel it, brethren?

But 'bout the courses of the sun, I have got that. I have done ranged through the whole blessed book and scode down the las' thing the Bible has to say 'bout the movements of the sun. I got all that pat and safe. And lemme say that if I don't give it to you straight, if I gets one word crooked or wrong, you jes' holler out, "Hol' on there, Jasper, you ain't got that straight," and I'll beg pardon. If I don't tell the truth, march up on these steps here and tell me I'se a liar, and I'll take it. I fears I do lie sometimes—I'm so sinful, I find it hard to do right; but my God don't lie and He ain't put no lie in the Book of eternal truth, and if I give you what the Bible say, then I boun' to tell the truth.

I got to take you all this afternoon on an excursion to a great battle-field. Most folks like to see fights—some is mighty fond of gettin' into fights, and some is mighty quick to run down the back alley when there is a battle goin' on, for the right. This time I'll escort you to a scene where you shall witness a curious battle. It took place soon after Israel got in the Promise Land. You 'member the people of Gibyun make friends with God's people when they first entered Canaan and they was monsus smart to do it. But, jes' the same, it got 'em in to an awful fuss. The cities roun' 'bout there flared up at that, and they all joined their forces and say they gwine to mop the Gibyun people off of the ground, and they bunched all their armies together and went up for to do it. When they come up so bold and brave the Giby'nites was

scared out'n their senses, and they sent word to Joshua that they was in trouble and he must run up there and get 'em out. Joshua had the heart of a lion and he was up there d'rectly. They had an awful fight, sharp and bitter, but you might know that General Joshua was not up there to get whipped. He prayed and he fought, and the hours got away too peart for him, and so he asked the Lord to issue a special order that the sun hold up awhile and that the moon furnish plenty of moonshine down on the lowest part of the fightin' grounds. As a fact, Joshua was so drunk with the battle, so thirsty for the blood of the enemies of the Lord, and so wild with the victory that he tell the sun to stand still till he could finish his job.

What did the sun do? Did he glare down in fiery wrath and say, "What you talkin' 'bout my stoppin' for, Joshua; I ain't never started yet. Been here all the time, and it would smash up everything if I was to start"? Naw, he ain't say that. But what the Bible say? That's what I ask to know. It say that it was at the voice of Joshua that it stopped. I don't say it stopped; tain't for Jasper to say that, but the Bible, the Book of God, say so. But I say this; nothin' can stop until it has first started. So I knows what I'm talkin' 'bout. The sun was travelin' 'long there through the sky when the order come. He hitched his red ponies and made quite a call on the land of Gibyun. He perch up there in the skies jes' as friendly as a neighbor whar comes to borrow somethin', and he stand up there and he look like he enjoyed the way Joshua waxes them wicked armies. And the moon, she wait down in the low grounds there, and pours out her light and look jes' as calm and happy as if she was waitin' for her 'scort. They never budged, neither of 'em, long as the Lord's army needed a light to carry on the battle.

I don't read when it was that Joshua hitch up and drove on, but I 'spose it was when the Lord told him to go. Anybody knows that the sun didn't stay there all the time. It stopped for business, and went on when it got through. This is 'bout all that I has to do with this particular case. I done showed you that this part of the Lord's word teaches you that the sun stopped, which show that he was movin' before that, and that he went on afterwards. I told you that I would prove this and I's done it, and I defies anybody to say that my point ain't made.

I told you in the first part of this discourse that the Lord God is a man of war. I 'spect by now you begin to see it is so. Don't you admit it? When the Lord come to see Joshua in the day of his fears and warfare, and actually make the sun stop stone still in the heavens, so the fight can rage on till all the foes is slain, you bleeed to understand that the God of peace is also the man of war. He can use both peace and war to help the reichus, and to scatter the host of the ailyuns. A man talked to me last week 'bout the laws of nature, and he say they can't possibly be upset, and I had to laugh right in his face. As if the laws of anything was greater than my God who is the lawgiver for

everything. My Lord is great; He rules in the heavens, in the earth, and down under the ground. He is great, and greatly to be praised. Let all the people bow down and worship before Him!

But let us get along, for there is quite a big lot more comin' on. Let us take next the case of Hezekiah. He was one of them kings of Judah—a mighty sorry lot I must say them kings was, for the most part. I inclines to think Hezekiah was 'bout the highest in the general average, and he war no mighty man hisself. Well, Hezekiah he got sick. I dare say that a king when he gets his crown and finery off, and when he is posterated with mortal sickness, he gets 'bout as common lookin' and grunts and rolls, and is 'bout as scarey as the rest of us poor mortals. We know that Hezekiah was in a low state of mind; full of fears, and in a terrible trouble. The fact is, the Lord strip him of all his glory and landed him in the dust. He told him that his hour had come, and that he had better square up his affairs, for death was at the door. Then it was that the king fell low before God; he turn his face to the wall; he cry, he moan, he begged the Lord not to take him out'n the world yet.

Oh, how good is our God! The cry of the king moved his heart, and he tell him he gwine to give him another show. Tain't only the kings that the Lord hears. The cry of the prisoner, the wail of the bondsman, the tears of the dying robber, the prayers of the backslider, the sobs of the woman that was a sinner, mighty apt to touch the heart of the Lord. It look like it's hard for the sinner to get so far off or so far down in the pit that his cry can't reach the ear of the merciful Saviour.

But the Lord do even better than this for Hezekiah—He tell him He gwine to give him a sign by which he'd know that what He said was commin' to pass. I ain't acquainted with them sun dials that the Lord tole Hezekiah 'bout, but anybody that has got a grain of sense knows that they was the clocks of them ole times and they marked the travels of the sun by them dials. When, therefore, God told the king that He would make the shadow go backward, it must have been jes' like puttin' the hands of the clock back, but, mark you, Isaiah 'spressly say that the sun returned ten degrees. There you are! Ain't that the movement of the sun? Bless my soul. Hezekiah's case beat Joshua. Joshua stop the sun, but here the Lord make the sun walk back ten degrees; and yet they say that the sun stand stone still and never move a peg. It look to me he move 'round mighty brisk and is ready to go any way that the Lord orders him to go. I wonder if any of them furloserfers is 'round here dis afternoon. I'd like to take a square look at one of them and ask him to 'splain this matter. He can't do it, my brethren. He knows a heap 'bout books, maps, figgers and long distances, but I defy him to take up Hezekiah's case and 'splain it off. He can't do it. The Word of the Lord is my defense and bulwark, and I fears not what men can say nor do; my God gives me the victory.

'Low me, my friends, to put myself square 'bout this movement of the sun. It ain't no business of mine whether the sun move or stand

still, or whether it stop or go back or rise or set. All that is out of my hands 'tirely, and I got nothin' to say. I got no theory on the subject. All I ask is that we will take what the Lord say 'bout it and let His will be done 'bout everything. What that will is I can't know 'cept He whisper into my soul or write it in a book. Here's the Book. This is 'nough for me, and with it to pilot me, I can't get far astray.

But I ain't done with you yet. As the song says, there's more to follow. I invite you to hear the first verse in the seventh chapter of the book of Revelations. What do John, under the power of the Spirit, say? He say he saw four angels standin' on the four corners of the earth, holdin' the four winds of the earth, and so forth. 'Low me to ask if the earth is round, where do it keep its corners? A flat, square thing has corners, but tell me where is the corner of an apple, or a marble, or a cannon ball, or a silver dollar. If there is any one of them furlosers where's been takin' so many cracks at my ole head 'bout here, he is cordially invited to step forward and square up this vexin' business. I here tell you that you can't square a circle, but it looks like these great scholars done learn how to circle the square. If they can do it, let 'em step to the front and do the trick. But, my brethren, in my poor judgment, they can't do it; tain't in 'em to do it. They is on the wrong side of the Bible; that's on the outside of the Bible, and there's where the trouble comes in with 'em. They done got out of the bres'wuks of the truth, and as long as they stay there the light of the Lord will not shine on their path. I ain't carin' so much 'bout the sun, though it's mighty convenient to have it, but my trust is in the Word of the Lord. Long as my feet is flat on the solid rock, no man can move me. I'se gettin' my orders from the God of my salvation.

T'other day a man with er hi coler and side whiskers come to my house. He was one nice Northern gentleman what think a heap of us colored people in the South. They are lovely folks and I honours 'em very much. He seem from the start kinder strictly and cross with me, and after while, he break out furious and frettid, and he say: "Allow me Mister Jasper to give you some plain advice. This nonsense 'bout the sun movin' where you are gettin' is disgracin' your race all over the country, and as a friend of you people, I come to say it's got to stop." Ha! Ha! Ha! Mars' Sam Hargrove never hardly smash me that way. It was equal to one of them ole overseers way back yonder. I tell him that if he'll show me I'se wrong, I give it all up.

My! My! Ha! Ha! He sail in on me and such a storm about science, nu 'scuv'ries, and the Lord only knows what all, I ner hur before, and then he tell me my race is ergin me and poor ole Jasper must shut up his fool mouth.

When he got through—it look like he never would—I tell him John Jasper ain't set up to be no scholar, and don't know the ferlosophiz, and ain't tryin' to hurt his people, but is workin' day and night to lift 'em up, but his foot is on the rock of eternal truth. There he stand and

there he is goin' to stand till Gabriel sounds the judgment note. So er say to the gentleman what scolded me up so that I hur him make his remarks, but I ain't hur where he get his Scripture from, and that 'tween him and the Word of the Lord I take my stand by the Word of God every time. Jasper ain't mad; he ain't fightin' nobody; he ain't been 'pointed janitor to run the sun: he nothin' but the servant of God and a lover of the Everlasting Word. What I care about the sun? The day comes on when the sun will be called from his racetrack, and his light squincked out forever; the moon shall turn to blood, and this earth be consumed with fire. Let 'em go; that won't scare me nor trouble God's elected people, for the Word of the Lord shall endure forever, and on that Solid Rock we stand and shall not be moved.

Is I got you satisfied yet? Has I proven my point? Oh, ye whose hearts is full of unbelief! Is you still holdin' out? I reckon the reason you say the sun don't move is 'cause you are hard to move yourself. You is a real trial to me, but never mind; I ain't givin' you up yet, and never will. Truth is mighty; it can break the heart of stone, and I must fire another arrow of truth out'n the quiver of the Lord. If you has a copy of God's Word 'bout your person, please turn to that minor prophet, Malachi, what writ the last book in the ole Bible, and look at chapter the first, verse 'leben; what do it say? I better read it, for I got a notion you critics don't carry any Bible in their pockets every day in the week. Here is what it says: "For from the risin' of the sun even unto the goin' down of the same My name shall be great 'mong the Gentiles. . . . My name shall be great 'mong the heathen, says the Lord of hosts." How do that suit you? It look like that ought to fix it. This time it is the Lord of hosts Hissself that is doin' the talkin', and He is talkin' on a wonderful and glorious subject. He is tellin' of the spreadin' of His Gospel, of the comin' of His last victory over the Gentiles, and the worldwide glories that at the last He is to get. Oh, my brethren, what a time that will be. My soul takes wing as I anticipate with joy that merlenium day! The glories as they shine before my eyes blinds me, and I forgets the sun and moon and stars. I jes' 'members that 'long 'bout those last days that the sun and moon will go out of business, for they won't be needed no more. Then will King Jesus come back to see His people, and He will be the sufficient light of the world. Joshua's battles will be over. Hezekiah won't need no sun dial, and the sun and moon will fade out before the glorious splendors of the New Jerusalem.

But what the matter with Jasper. I mos' forget my business, and mos' gone to shoutin' over the far away glories of the second comin' of my Lord. I beg pardon, and will try to get back to my subject. I have to do as the sun in Hezekiah's case—fall back a few degrees. In that part of the Word that I gin you from Malachi—that the Lord Hissself spoke—He 'clares that His glory is gwine to spread. Spread? Where? From the risin' of the sun to the goin' down of the same. What? Don't say that, does it? That's exactly what it says. Ain't that clear 'nough

for you? The Lord pity these doubtin' Thomases. Here is 'nough to settle it all and cure the wors' cases. Walk up here, wise folks, and get your medicine. Where is them high collared philosophers now? What they skulkin' 'round in the brush for? Why don't you get out in the broad afternoon light and fight for your cullurs? Ah, I un'stands it; you got no answer. The Bible is agin you, and in your consciences you are convicted.

But I hears you back there. What you whisperin' 'bout? I know; you say you sent me some papers and I never answer them. Ha, ha, ha! I got 'em. The difficulty 'bout them papers you sent me is that they did not answer me. They never mention the Bible one time. You think so much of yourselfs and so little of the Lord God and thinks what you say is so smart that you can't even speak of the Word of the Lord. When you ask me to stop believin' in the Lord's Word and to pin my faith to your words, I ain't a gwine to do it. I take my stand by the Bible and rest my case on what it says. I take what the Lord says 'bout my sins, 'bout my Saviour, 'bout life, 'bout death, 'bout the world to come, and I take what the Lord say 'bout the sun and moon, and I cares little what the haters of my God chooses to say. Think that I will forsake the Bible? It is my only Book, my hope, the arsenal of my soul's supplies, and I wants nothin' else.

But I got another word for you yet. I done work over them papers that you sent me without date and without your name. You deals in figures and thinks you are bigger than the archangels. Lemme see what you done say. You set yourself up to tell me how far it is from here to the sun. You think you got it down to to a nice p'int. You say it is 3,339,002 miles from the earth to the sun. That's what you say. 'Nother one say that the distance is 12,000,000; 'nother got it to 27,000,000. I hears that the great Isaac Newton worked it up to 28,000,000, and later on the philosophers gin another rippin' raze to 50,000,000. The last one gets it bigger than all the others, up to 90,000,000. Don't any of 'em agree exactly and so they runs a guess game, and the last guess is always the biggest. Now, when these guessers can have a convention in Richmond and all agree upon the same thing, I'd be glad to hear from you again, and I does hope that by that time you won't be ashamed of your name.

Heaps of railroads has been built since I saw the first one when I was fifteen years ole, but I ain't hear tell of a railroad built yet to the sun. I don't see why if they can measure the distance to the sun, they might not get up a railroad or a telegraph and enable us to find something else 'bout it than merely how far off the sun is. They tell me that a cannon ball could make the trip to the sun in twelve years. Why don't they send it? It might be rigged up with quarters for a few philosophers on the inside and fixed up for a comfortable ride. They would need twelve years' rations and a heap of changes of raiment—mighty thick clothes when they start and mighty thin ones when they get there.

Oh, my brethren, these things make you laugh, and I don't blame you for laughin', 'cept it's always sad to laugh at the follies of fools. If we could laugh 'em out'n kount'nens, we might well laugh day and night. What cuts into my soul is, that all these men seem to me that they is hittin' at the Bible. That's what stirs my soul and fills me with righteous wrath. Little cares I what they says 'bout the sun, provided they let the Word of the Lord alone. But never mind. Let the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. Our King shall break 'em in pieces and dash 'em down. But blessed be the name of our God, the Word of the Lord endureth forever. Stars may fall, moons may turn to blood, and the sun set to rise no more, but Thy kingdom, oh Lord, is from everlastin' to everlastin'.

But I has a word this afternoon for my own brethren. They is the people for whose souls I got to watch—for them I got to stand and report at the last—they is my sheep and I'se their shepherd, and my soul is knit to them forever. 'Tain for me to be troublin' you with these questions about them heavenly bodies. Our eyes goes far beyond the smaller stars; our home is clean outer sight of them twinklin' orbs; the chariot that will come to take us to our Father's mansion will sweep out by them flickerin' lights and never halt till it brings us in clear view of the throne of the Lamb. Don' hitch your hopes to no sun nor stars; your home is got Jesus for its light, and your hopes must travel up that way. I preach this sermon just for to settle the minds of my few brethren, and repeats it 'cause kin' friends wish to hear it, and I hopes it will do honour to the Lord's Word. But nothin' short of the pearly gates can satisfy me, and I charge, my people, fix your feet on the Solid Rock, your hearts on Calvary, and your eyes on the throne of the Lamb. These strifes and griefs 'll soon get over; we shall see the King in His glory and be at ease. Go on, go on, ye ransom of the Lord; shout His praises as you go, and I shall meet you in the city of the New Jerusalem, where we shan't need the light of the sun, for the Lamb of the Lord is the light of the saints.

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ROBERT MURRAY McCHEYNE

1813 - 1843



ROBERT MURRAY MCCHEYNE, from an engraving by John Le Conte of the painting by Hope J. Stewart, from a sketch by McCheyne.

ROBERT MURRAY McCHEYNE

- 1813 *Born May 21 in Edinburgh, Scotland*
- 1827 *Matriculated at University of Edinburgh*
- 1831 *Entered Divinity Hall of University of Edinburgh*
- 1835 *Licensed to preach by the Annan Presbytery and assisted in united parishes of Larbert and Dunipace*
- 1836 *Ordained to the ministry and served in St. Peter's in Dundee*
- 1837 *Became secretary to the Association for Church Extension in the County of Forfar*
- 1838 *Retired from pastoral work due to ill health*
- 1839 *Went on mission to the Jews in Europe and the Holy Land and returned to Scotland*
- 1843 *Died March 25 in Dundee, Scotland*

HE LIVED not quite thirty years and his preaching ministry covered only seven years; nevertheless Robert Murray McCheyne is numbered among the great Christian preachers. No one else among the greats lived such a short time; yet few have contributed as much inspiration to live the Christ-centered life as McCheyne.

LIFE AND TIMES

Scotland is often thought of as a land of deep piety and fervent religious devotion. That was not the case when Robert Murray McCheyne was born. In 1813 Scotland was a land of many churches, but the fires of true Christian devotion were burning low. During his youth the beginnings of religious revival could be seen in the country, and in his brief life McCheyne contributed to the revival which brought Scotland to a high point in her Christian history.

He grew up in a Christian home surrounded by wholesome influences. His family gave him superb Christian training. Robert loved deeply an older brother, David, his senior by eight or nine years, who died when Robert was eighteen. The death of this older brother significantly affected him. A year after David's death he wrote: "On this morning last year came the first overwhelming blow to my worldliness; how blessed to me Thou, O God, only knowest, who has made it so."¹ Years later he wrote to a friend:

Pray for me, that I may be made holier and wiser—less like myself, and more like my heavenly Master; that I may not regard my life, if so be I may finish my course with joy. This day eleven years ago, I lost my loved and loving brother, and began to seek a Brother who cannot die.²

His university and divinity training also contributed to his Christian growth. He matriculated in the University of Edinburgh in 1827 and entered the Divinity Hall of the university in 1831. Thomas Chalmers impressed all who came under his influence as professor in the university and preacher in the city; it was particularly so with McCheyne. During his divinity school years McCheyne met with friends for Bible study and prayer. Chalmers heard of the simple and literal way in which the students interpreted the words of Scripture; he said, "I like these literalities."

After completing his studies in the divinity school, he began active work in the ministry. The Annan Presbytery licensed him to preach on July 1, 1835. The opportunity to preach was not taken lightly by McCheyne. He wrote in a diary:

Preached three probationary discourses in Annan Church, and, after an examination in Hebrew, was solemnly licensed to preach the gospel. . . . What I have so long desired as the highest honor of man, Thou at length givest me—me who dare scarcely use the words of Paul: "Unto me who am less than the least of all

1. S. Maxwell Coder, "Biographical Introduction," in *Memoirs of McCheyne*, pt. 2, ed. Andrew A. Bonar (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 11.

2. *Ibid.*

saints is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.’³

He preached in various places for several months; then Mr. John Bonar invited him to become his assistant in the united parishes of Larbert and Dunipace, near Stirling. Following ten months of work at Larbert and Dunipace, McCheyne answered a call to pastor a new church, St. Peter's in Dundee. His congregation numbered about 1,100 persons. He was ordained on November 24, 1836, to become a full minister in the Church of Scotland.

In addition to his labor to improve his sermons, he worked to develop a meaningful devotional life. He secured time for devotion before breakfast, believing that three chapters from the Bible were little enough food for his soul at the beginning of each day. One Sunday he wrote in his diary: “Very happy in my work. Too little prayer in the morning. Must try to get early to bed on Saturday, that I may ‘rise a great while before day.’”

Ill health caused him to lay aside his pastoral work late in 1838. While attempting to regain his health, he toured Europe and the Holy Land to gather information on Jewish evangelism. Returning to Scotland at the end of 1839, he discovered a remarkable revival in progress. Under the preaching of W. C. Burns, Dundee was in the midst of a great spiritual awakening. McCheyne rejoiced to find this religious revival. Caught up in the spirit of evangelism, he preached a number of evangelistic missions in England and Scotland.

McCheyne had the gifts of a scholar but his primary concern was evangelism; he used his unusual intellectual powers to persuade men to trust Jesus. His messages were directed not only to adults but also to children. He urged children to “fly to Christ”; he urged them to “come to Christ now” because of the shortness and uncertainty of life. The death of his brother, and perhaps his apprehension concerning his own early death, heightened this emphasis. His evangelistic concern was both for his own people and for the whole world. He developed a special concern for the Jews. He labored to convince his fellow ministers and the people of Scotland of the need to take the gospel to the Jews.

3. Andrew A. Bonar, ed., *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1892), p. 33.

Certain social issues caught his attention. Especially did he attack any violation of the sabbath. The decision of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway to run Sunday trains stirred his indignation. He considered such acts to be the height of blasphemy and infidelity. He spoke concerning the need of strong family life. Convinced that families with stability rested upon firm spiritual foundations, he urged that family members take seriously their spiritual responsibilities.

Having given himself untiringly to the proclamation of the gospel in spite of ill health, he died when he was not yet thirty. His death came in Dundee, Scotland, on March 25, 1843. A biographer has described his death:

In the spring of 1843, he visited the north of England on an evangelical mission, and made similar journeys to London and Aberdeenshire. On returning from the latter place, he was seized with a sudden illness. In visiting some people sick of the fever, he had caught the infection. The crisis came on March 24, 1843.

When it became known that his life was in danger, a weeping multitude assembled at St. Peter's. Next morning, at a quarter past nine, he expired, and all that day nothing was to be heard in the houses around but lamentation and great mourning, and, as a friend in that neighborhood wrote, "In passing along the high road, you saw the faces of every one swollen with weeping."⁴

He left a rich store of sermonic material reflecting his intelligent and compassionate concern for men and their relationship to God in Christ. His notes indicate a deep desire that above all else, he would preach Christ; on one occasion he wrote, "I fear the love of applause or effect goes a great way. May God keep me from preaching myself instead of Christ crucified."⁵ God granted his request—throughout his brief life, he faithfully preached Christ crucified.

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Without the appreciation of his contemporaries, McCheyne would be unknown to us today. His life was so brief, and his

4. Andrew A. Bonar, ed., *Memoirs of McCheyne*, pt. 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 25. Used by permission of Moody Press, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

5. Coder, p. 13.

pastorate of no great fame, that his sermons scarcely could have been expected to attract much attention. In fact, were it not for the comments of notable preachers who greatly admired him, the preaching of McCheyne would probably be forgotten. Yet so many Christians were moved by his preaching and the example of his short life that he did not drop into obscurity. Only a few men have lived and ministered as briefly and nonetheless managed to cast such influence over the lives of others. Indeed, the very brevity of his life, with a pastoral ministry undistinguished except for its piety, suggests that Robert Murray McCheyne must have been far from an average young preacher to attract fame so early.

Even though McCheyne died at age twenty-nine, his preaching had already attracted great crowds. Excitement attended his services, and McCheyne was well on the way to a spectacular career as a preacher when he died. In a brief ministry of only seven years McCheyne had attracted such attention as few men know in a lifetime.

What was the secret of his attraction to others? McCheyne had a fine mind; some felt he could have become noted for his scholarship. But theological genius was not his secret. His writing was excellent, and some claimed that he might have gained a name by his writing. His devotional writings have had spectacular influence, but they are not altogether the reason for his greatness. McCheyne was a man of charismatic personality. It would be easy enough to say that his personality accounted for his success. He was an attractive man with gracious ways and appealing manners, but many other men have had those characteristics and not had the profound influence of McCheyne.

He was a good preacher, at times even a great preacher. Of the examples of his sermons included in this study, the sermon "The Vision of Dry Bones" is likely the finest. There is an urgency in these sermons which even yet speaks; a gracious concern, a zeal for holy things. McCheyne showed the promise of a magnificent preacher—but his preaching was not allotted sufficient time for that judgment to be borne out.

What then was the secret of his profoundly appealing life? The question contains the answer: McCheyne's secret was his appealing life.

McCheyne continued the long tradition of the devout pietists. His gentle spirit and mystical soul remind us of a Scottish

St. Francis. In his preaching, McCheyne spoke of his vision of God. Common men saw in him a luminous example of Christ-likeness; discouraged pastors saw him as a glowing coal from God's altar, an instrument which might perhaps inspire their own lips to prophecy. According to Bonar, the preaching of McCheyne was "the giving out of his own inward life, the unfolding of his own soul's experience as he grew in grace and knowledge of his Lord and Savior. . . . He gave out not merely living water, but living water drawn at the springs that he himself drank of. . . ."⁶

McCheyne was particularly conscious that the life of a preacher was even more influential than his words. Bonar writes:

Aware that one idle word, one needless contention, one covetous act, may destroy in our people the effect of many a solemn expostulation and earnest warning, he was particularly circumspect in his everyday walk. He wished to be always in the presence of God. . . . We are persuaded that next to his habitual dependence upon the Spirit of God, the occasion of his uncommon success was the conspicuousness of his Christian character. He lived in the eyes of his people. Though his house had been a glass-fronted cabinet, they could scarcely have been more minutely cognizant of his movements and whole manner of life. They knew that his weekdays were but a sequel to his Sabbath. His contemporaries thus recognized the powerful appeal of his life.⁷

His life found such eloquent expression through his sermons that great crowds filled the church when he preached. Preaching was not as casual for McCheyne as it was for St. Francis or some of the German mystics; his sermons were neither way-side addresses nor exhortations delivered to a drawing-room crowd of the spiritually elite. McCheyne's sermons were carefully studied attempts to influence the unconverted as well as the devout.

When he was a student at Divinity Hall in Edinburgh, he felt that the homiletics classes of David Welch were tiresome. Such careful planning did not suit the impetuous soul of the

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

7. Andrew A. Bonar, *The Biography of Robert Murray McCheyne* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 86.

mystic. Later he altered his opinion: "I used to despise Dr. Welch's rules at the time I heard him; but now I feel I must use them, for nothing is more needful for making a sermon meaningful and impressive than a logical arrangement."⁸ Many of his sermons show that he used the lessons learned in class. Usually his outlines are extremely simple, as in his sermon "Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life," where those three terms form the substance of his outline. He does sub-point many of his sermons, but the development within the sub-pointing is more descriptive than explanatory or argumentative. His illustrations are usually taken from the Scriptures; although in the sermon, "Do What You Can," he does cite an example from the life of John Newton. Such illustrations are rare.

His introductions are generally weak, almost nonexistent. McCheyne customarily began with an exposition of certain phrases in the text, although occasionally he devoted a few sentences to the statement of his theme or a description of the historical background of the text. The finest example of his introductions occurs in the sermon "The Vision of Dry Bones." In this excellent sermon he begins with a description of the conditions which existed in the time of Ezekiel:

In early life the Prophet Ezekiel had been witness of sieges and battle-fields—he had himself experienced many of the horrors and calamities of war; and this seems to have tinged his natural character in such a way that his prophecies, more than those of any other prophet, are full of terrific images and visions of dreadful things. In these words we have the description of a vision which, for grandeur and terrible sublimity, is perhaps unequalled in any other part of the Bible.

He describes himself as set down by God in the midst of a valley that was full of bones. It seemed as if he were stationed in the midst of some spacious battle-field, where thousands and tens of thousands had been slain, and none left behind to bury them. The eagles had many a time gathered over the carcasses, and none frayed them away; and the wolves of the mountains had eaten the flesh of these mighty men, and drunk the blood of princes. The rains of heaven had bleached them, and the winds that sighed over the open valley had made

8. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

them bare; and many a summer sun had whitened and dried the bones. And as the prophet went round and round to view the dismal scene, these two thoughts arose in his mind: "Behold, they are very many; and, lo, they are very dry."

This same citation reveals another gift of McCheyne—his poetic expression. Many of his descriptive passages are almost lyrical in nature, as are many of the writings of the mystics. It is no coincidence that McCheyne, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Francis of Assisi were all fascinated with the Song of Songs. The poetic nature of that mystical allegory matched their personalities and filled them with inspiration. One contemporary said of McCheyne:

McCheyne had much of the poet in his nature, and his preaching could never be commonplace. There was pathos in it; there was winningness; there was fire. From everything frigid and formal it was far withdrawn. Life quivered in its utterances, and passed through them to the men and women who heard.⁹

But McCheyne never allowed his poetic inclinations to obscure his scriptural interests. He tried to emulate the ministry of the apostles in his method of preaching:

After announcing the subject of a discourse, he called attention to the context, then proceeded to bring out the doctrines of the text. . . . He referred to himself as "just an interpreter of Scripture." Far from simply preaching Bible doctrine, he sought to preach Christ, from whom all doctrine shoots forth as rays from a center.¹⁰

As for his style of preaching, McCheyne wrote out his sermons carefully but preached without notes:

From the very beginning of his ministry he reprobated the custom of reading sermons, believing that to do so does exceedingly weaken the freedom and natural fervor of the messenger in delivering his message. Neither did he recite what he had written. But his

9. Alexander Smellie, *Robert Murray McCheyne* (London: National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1913), p. 66.

10. Bonar, *Memoirs of McCheyne*, pp. 19-20.

custom was to impress on his memory the substance of what he had beforehand carefully written, and then to speak as he found liberty.¹¹

His piety impressed itself upon all who heard him. His preaching seemed to be a continuation of his prayers: "In both he spoke from within the veil, his hand on the mercy seat, and his eye fixed on things invisible."

His presence in the pulpit was appealing. His biographer described the effect McCheyne made as he spoke:

His voice was remarkably clear—his manner attractive by its mild dignity. His form itself drew the eye. He spoke from the pulpit as one earnestly occupied with the souls before him. He made them feel sympathy with what he spoke, for his own eye and heart were on them.¹²

Unfortunately, the preaching of McCheyne contains the weaknesses of the mystic as well as the strengths. At times he is allegorical in interpretation. Sometimes the Scripture seems lost in poetic reverie, even if such moments are comparatively few. He was evangelical, evangelistic, warm-hearted; yet his interests seem narrow, and only occasionally does he refer to any sphere larger than the private world of the individual soul. A few of his remarks are more emotionally appealing than logically true. Even his biographer was aware of some of these faults:

He was sometimes a little unguarded in his statements, when his heart was deeply moved and his feelings stirred, and sometimes he was too long in his addresses; but this also arose from the fulness of his soul.¹³

Bonar says that the voice of McCheyne was "remarkably clear," but apparently everyone did not agree; one writer said:

When James Hamilton listened to it first, he did not like the voice; he thought that the "slow and almost singing cadence" was affectation. The preacher's father,

11. Bonar, *Biography of Robert Murray McCheyne*, p. 48.

12. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, p. 63.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

too, lamented the change in that voice, "once so melodious." It "soon became cracked and broken," he says; "long discourses, sometimes three in a day, during the delivery of which he was naturally much excited, wrought mischievous effects."¹⁴

Perhaps McCheyne once had a naturally fine voice that became damaged from misuse; the description by his father sounds as if he abused his voice through continual use.

Nevertheless, neither the voice of McCheyne, nor his limited view of the world, nor his occasional allegory, could prevent the profound effect of a thoroughly dedicated and Christlike life. The fervor and appeal of his messages still speak through these sermons which remain.

14. Smellie, pp. 66-67.

Sermons

THE VISION OF DRY BONES

“The hand of the Lord was upon me . . .” (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

IN EARLY LIFE the Prophet Ezekiel had been witness of sieges and battle-fields—he had himself experienced many of the horrors and calamities of war; and this seems to have tinged his natural character in such a way that his prophecies, more than those of any other prophet, are full of terrific images and visions of dreadful things. In these words we have the description of a vision which, for grandeur and terrible sublimity, is perhaps unequalled in any other part of the Bible.

He describes himself as set down by God in the midst of a valley that was full of bones. It seemed as if he were stationed in the midst of some spacious battle-field, where thousands and tens of thousands had been slain, and none left behind to bury them. The eagles had many a time gathered over the carcasses, and none frayed them away; and the wolves of the mountains had eaten the flesh of these mighty men, and drunk the blood of princes. The rains of heaven had bleached them, and the winds that sighed over the open valley had made them bare; and many a summer sun had whitened and dried the bones. And as the prophet went round and round to view the dismal scene, these two thoughts arose in his mind: “Behold, they are very many; and, lo, they are very dry.”

If the place had not been an open valley, it might have seemed to his wondering gaze some vast charnel-house—as if the tombs of all the Pharaohs had been laid bare by some shock of nature to the wild winds of heaven—as if the wanton hand of violence had rifled the vast cemeteries of Egypt, and cast forth the mummied bones of other ages to bleach and whiten in the light of heaven. How expressive are the brief words of the seer: “Behold, they are very many; and, lo, they are very dry!”

No doubt there was an awful silence spread over this scene of deso-

Reprinted from Robert Murray McCheyne, *Additional Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1847), pp. 272-81.

lateness and death; but the voice of his heavenly guide breaks in upon his ear: "*Son of man, can these bones live?*"

How strange a question was this to put concerning dry, whitened bones! When Jesus said of the damsel: "She is not dead, but sleepeth," they laughed him to scorn; but here were not bodies newly dead, but bones—bare, whitened bones; nay, they were not even skeletons, for bone was separated from its bone; and yet God asks: "Can these bones live?" Had he asked this question of the world, they would have laughed a louder laugh of scorn; but he asked it of one who, though once dead had been made alive by God; and he answered: "O Lord God, thou knowest." They cannot live of themselves, for they are dead and dry; but if thou wilt put thy living Spirit into them, they shall live. So, then, thou only knowest.

Receiving this answer of faith from the prophet, God bids him prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them: "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Had the prophet walked by sight, and not by faith, he would have staggered at the promise, through unbelief. Had he been a worshipper of reason, he would have argued: These bones have no ears to hear, why should I preach to them, "Hear the word of the Lord"? But no—he believed God rather than himself. He had been taught "the exceeding greatness of his mighty power;" and therefore he obeyed: "*So I prophesied as I was commanded.*"

If the scene which Ezekiel first beheld was dismal and desolate, the scene which now opened on his eyes was more dismal—more awfully revolting still: "And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking; and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them." If it were a hideous sight before, to see the valley full of bones, all cleansed by the rains and winds, and whitened in the summer suns, how much more hideous now, to see these slain, bone joined to his bone—sinews, and flesh, and skin upon them; but no breath in them! Here was a battlefield indeed, with its thousands of unburied dead—masses of unbreathing flesh, cold and immovable, ready only to putrefy—every hand stiff and motionless—every bosom without a heave—every eye glazed and lifeless—every tongue cold and silent as the grave.

But the voice of God again breaks the silence: "Prophesy unto the wind (or Spirit), prophesy, son of man, and say to the Spirit, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live."

Before, Ezekiel had bent over the dead, dry bones, and preached unto them—a vast but lifeless congregation; but now he lifts his head

and raises his eyes; for his word is to the living Spirit of God. Unbelief might have whispered to him, To whom are you going to prophesy now? Reason might have argued, What sense is there in speaking to the viewless wind—to one whom you see not; for it is written: "The world cannot receive the Spirit of God, because it seeth him not"? But he staggered not at the word through unbelief: "*So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*"

The first application made of this vision is to the restoration of the Jews. 1. It teaches that at present they are like dry bones in the open valley—scattered over all lands—very many, and very dry—without any life to God. 2. It teaches that the preaching of Jesus, though foolishness to the world, is to be the means of their awakening, and that prayer to the all-quickening Spirit is to be the means of their new life. 3. It teaches that when these means are used with them, God's ancient people shall yet stand up, and be an exceeding great army—shall be as they used to be when they marched through the wilderness, when God went before them in the pillar of cloud; that they shall then be led back to their own land, and planted in their own land, and not plucked up any more. But another, and to us a more important, application of this vision, is to the unconverted souls in the midst of us. Let us go over it with this view.

I. *Unconverted souls are like dry bones—very many, and very dry.*

1. *They are very many.* When a soul is first brought to Christ, he enjoys a peace in believing which he never knew before; and not only so, but he is quickened from the death of trespasses and sins into a life which he never knew before—he knows the blessedness of living to God. But even with all this joy, there is an awful feeling of loneliness; for when he looks round upon the world, he feels just like Ezekiel, set down in the midst of a valley full of dry bones. He is alive himself, but this world, once all his joy, looks now like some ancient battle-field, where the remains of the dead are all lying exposed on the open field; and he feels a solitary thing in a world of dead. This world appears now like one vast charnel-house, where whole generations of dead meet, and are jumbled together—all alike fit only for the burning; and he feels himself a solitary living thing, moving over heaps of slain. He feels like Elijah on the Mount of God, when he complained: "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I, even I, am left alone." He feels like our blessed Lord, who was a light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. He feels as if he were a feeble "light in the world, holding forth the word of life"—a lamp suspended in the densest darkness, whose oil is all supplied by grace from on high, and whose rays seem only to make the darkness more visible. He feels like Paul at Athens; for his spirit is moved in him, to see the whole world given over to idolatry. He feels like Paul at

Rome, when he complained: "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." He feels like John, when he said so sweetly, yet so sadly: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." To the eye of sense, O what a happy living world this is, with its shops and markets—its compliments and companies—its visits of ceremony and visits of kindness—its mirth and its melody! how living and life-like is the whole world, from morning's dawn till midnight. But to the eye of faith, what a lonely wilderness is this world! for "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Is it not so, believing brethren? Is it not like Egypt in that dreadful night when there was a cry heard from every dwelling; for there was not a house where there was not one dead? Oh! it is more dismal far; for in every house there are many dead souls, and yet there is no cry. Look into your own family—look among the families of your neighbours—look into your native town—are not the many all dead, dead souls? The most are dead, dry bones. Nay, look into the Christian Church—look among our Sabbath keepers, and those who sit down at sacraments—O, brethren! is it not true that, like the members of the Church of Sardis, most have a name to live and are dead? Do not the most of you live lives of pleasure? and is it not written: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth?" Do not most of you show no love for the brethren? and is it not written: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death?" O yes, the most are dry bones! Truly, then, "they are very many."

2. *They are very dry.* Dry bones are the farthest of all from the possibility of living. (1.) They are without any flesh or comeliness. (2.) They are without any marrow or spirit. (3.) They are without any activity or power of moving. And oh! is not this the very picture of poor, unconverted souls—"They are very dry"?

(1.) *They are without any comeliness.* They see no beauty in Christ, and Christ sees no beauty in them—their souls are lean and ill-favoured. Man was made perfect in beauty at the first; for he was made in the image of Him who is perfect loveliness; but a fallen, unconverted soul has no beauty—it is like a beautiful building scattered in ruins—it is like a beautiful statue all defaced, not one feature remaining—it is like a beautiful body smitten by death, corrupting in the grave.

(2.) *They are without any marrow or spirit.* Man was made to be a habitation of God through the Spirit; and it is only when we are led by the Spirit that we are alive unto God. But the unconverted soul is "sensual, not having the Spirit." The Bible says: "The world cannot receive the Spirit, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." They have no work of the Spirit in their hearts—no awakening work—no convincing of righteousness—no sanctifying work—no sealing of the soul—no walking in the Spirit—no love in the Spirit—no praying in the Holy Ghost.

(3.) *They have no activity or motion God-ward.* If we preach the Word of the Lord unto them, they have no heart to attend to the things which are spoken; dry bones have no ears. If we tell them of the wrath of God that is coming upon them, they are not moved to flee; dry bones cannot run. If we tell them of the loveliness of the Lord Jesus—how he offers himself to be their complete Saviour—still they are not moved to embrace him; for dry bones cannot stretch out their arms. Ah! these dry bones are very dry.

Brethren, is it not possible to make you anxious about your souls? Can you sit still and hear how dead and dry they are, and yet go away and forget it all? Can you bear to carry about with you a dead stone in your bosom instead of a heart? Can you bear to have such a cold, icy, wicked heart, as sees no desirableness in the lovely Saviour—no beauty in him who is stretching out his hands to you all the day—“the chief among ten thousand”—the “altogether lovely”? Oh, brethren! if you will go away unmoved—and, doubtless, hundreds of you may—what need have we of witnesses? Ye yourselves are the only evidence we need that unconverted souls are “very many; and, lo, they are very dry.”

II. *The second lesson we learn from this vision is, that preaching is God's instrument for awakening the unconverted.*

Every intelligent man among you has been puzzled at one time or another by a seeming contradiction which runs through the whole of the Bible. It is written in one place: “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him”; and yet the whole Bible through bids every one of you come to Jesus. Again it is written: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them”; and yet what are we continually urging upon you, but to receive the things of the Spirit of God? Again, God opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul—which makes it plain that no natural heart can attend; and yet we do nothing but press these things on your attention. By nature your hearts are as hard as adamant, and even demonstration will not make you flee from hell; yet, “knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.” By nature you cannot so much as comprehend the beauty and loveliness of the Lord Jesus; and yet “we are determined to know nothing among you but Christ, and him crucified.” Oh! what a mass of contradiction there is here; and yet how easily it is solved! These bones were dead, dry, spiritless, lifeless, without flesh, without ears to hear; and yet God says: “*Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*” And while he prophesied there was a noise, and “behold a shaking; and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them, above.” Just so, my unconverted friends, your souls are like these dry bones—dead, dry, spiritless, lifeless, without ears to

hear, without hearts to attend to the things which are spoken. You have such blunted consciences, that no words of mine can move you to flee from the wrath to come; you have such hard, wicked hearts, that no words of mine can persuade you to embrace the beseeching Saviour; and yet it is by the foolishness of preaching that it pleases God to save them that believe; and though our words have no power, yet God can work almightily through them; and this is his message unto you: "*O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*"

I earnestly beseech those of you who care little for the preaching of the Word to attend to this. You may say, and say truly, that preaching seems a weak and foolish instrument for such a work—God himself has called it "the foolishness of preaching." You may say, and say truly, that ministers are but earthen vessels—that they are men of like passions with yourselves—God himself has called them so before you. But you cannot say that it is not God's way of converting souls; and it is at the peril of your own souls if ye despise it. Keep away from the house of God, and lock up your Bible, and you put away from you the only instruments by which God can reach you.

III. *The third and last lesson we learn from this vision is, that prayer must be added to preaching, else preaching is in vain.*

The effects produced by the prophesying of Ezekiel to the dry bones were very remarkable. The bones came together, bone to his bone—the flesh, the sinews, the skin came up upon them, and covered them; but still there was no breath in them—they were as dead as ever. And, oh! how like this is to the effects which often follow on the preaching of the Word. How often is a people outwardly reformed! Instead of Sabbath breaking there is Sabbath observance—instead of drunkenness, sobriety—the form of godliness, but none of the power—the bones, and sinews, and flesh, and skin of godliness, but none of the living breath of godliness. Ah! my friends, is not this just the way with our congregations at this day? abundance of head knowledge, but, ah! where is the lowly heart that loves the Saviour? Abundance of orthodoxy and argument, but, ah! where is the simple faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints? Does not the Saviour say, when he looks down on our Churches: "There is no breath in them"? Oh! then, brethren, let us, one and all, give heed to the second command to the prophet: "Prophesy unto the Spirit, son of man; say, Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Learn two lessons from this.

1st, Unconverted friends, what dead hearts you must have—all the preaching in the world cannot put life into them. What hard hearts yours must be—the heaviest hammer we can lift cannot break them.

We speak the weightiest arguments into your ear, yet all will not move you. We must lift up our voice, and prophesy to the Spirit—we must bring down the Almighty Spirit before we can touch your heart. We try to convince you of sin—we show you how you have broken the law, and that “cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them”—that you must be under that curse—that you will not be able to bear that curse—that it crushed the Saviour to the earth, and will crush you to the lowest hell. You are somewhat impressed, and we hope that your heart is touched; but your impressions are like impressions on the sand when the tide is out, and the very next tide of the world effaces all. We try to convince you of righteousness. We tell you of the love of the Saviour, how it passeth knowledge; how there was an ocean of love in that bosom, which no line could fathom—love to lost sinners like you; how he served in the stead of sinners, obeying the law for us; how he suffered in the stead of sinners, bearing the curse for us. We tell you to believe in him, and be saved; you are melted, and the tear stands on your cheek; but, ah! it is like “the morning cloud and early dew—it quickly passes away.”

Ah! brethren, what hard, iron hearts you must have, when all that man can do will not melt them. Your hearts are too hard for us; and we have to go back weeping to our Lord, saying: “Who hath believed our report?” In all other things we could persuade you by arguments. If your bodies were sick, we could persuade you to send for the physician—if your estate were entangled, we could persuade you to be diligent for your family—oh! how readily you would obey us; but when we demonstrate that you are the heirs, soul and body, of an eternal hell, you will not awake for it all. Even if we could show you the Lord Jesus Christ himself—the bleeding, beseeching Saviour—your wicked hearts would not turn or cleave to him. You need Him that made your hearts, to break and bend them. Will you not, each of you, go away, then, beating on the breast, and saying: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner”?

Learn, 2dly, Believing brethren, what need you have to pray. When God, in the chapter before (Ezek. 36), promises to give a new heart and a new spirit to Israel—“to take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and to give them an heart of flesh”—he adds, at verse 37: “I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” And when God promises to give to Christ the heathen for his heritage, he only promises it in answer to prayer: “Ask of me, and I will give thee.” And just so here; when he wishes to give life to these dead carcasses that are lying in the open valley, his word is: “Prophecy, O son of man, unto the Spirit.”

O believing brethren! what an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe. O men of faith and prayer!—Israel's, who wrestle with God, and pre-

vail!—righteous, justified men, whose prayers avail much!—you may be a little flock, but be you entreated to give the Lord no rest. O pray for the Spirit to “breathe upon these slain, that they may live!” And you, selfish Christians, if such a contradiction can exist—you, who approach the throne of God only for yourselves—you, whose petitions begin and end only for yourselves—who ask no gifts but only for your own peace and joy—go you and learn what this meaneth: “It is more blessed to give than to receive”—“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

DO WHAT YOU CAN

“She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying” (Mark 14:8).

FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 11:2, we learn that this woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. We have already learned that she was an eminent believer: “She sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard His word.” Jesus Himself said of her: “Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Now it is interesting to see this same Mary eminent in another way,—not only as a *contemplative believer*, but as an *active believer*.

Many seem to think that to be a believer is to have certain feelings and experiences; forgetting all the time that these are but the flowers, and that the fruit must follow. The engrafting of the branch is good, the inflowing of the sap good, but the fruit is the end in view. So faith is good, and peace and joy are good, but holy fruit is the end for which we are saved.

I trust many of you, last Sabbath, were like Mary, sitting at the Redeemer’s feet, and hearing His word. Now I would persuade you to be like Mary, in *doing what you can for Christ*. If you have been bought

with a price, then glorify God in your body and spirit, which are His. I beseech you by the mercies of God.

I. *These are things which we can do.*

(1) *We could love Christ, pray and praise more.*—What this woman did she did to Christ. Jesus had saved her soul, had saved her brother and sister, and she felt that she could not do too much for Him. She brought an alabaster box of ointment, very costly, and brake the box, and poured it on His head. No doubt she loved His disciples—holy John and frank Peter—yet still she loved Christ more. No doubt she loved Christ's poor, and was often kind to them; yet she loved Jesus more. On His blessed head, that was so soon to be crowned with thorns—on His blessed feet, that were so soon to be pierced with nails—she poured the precious ointment. This is what we should do. If we have been saved by Christ, we should pour out our best affections on Him. It is well to love His disciples, well to love His ministers, well to love His poor, but it is best to love Himself. We cannot now reach His blessed head, nor anoint His holy feet; but we can fall down at His footstool, and pour out our affections towards Him. It was not the ointment Jesus cared for—what does the King of Glory care for a little ointment?—but it is the loving heart, poured out upon His feet; it is the adoration, praise, love, and prayers of a believer's broken heart, that Christ cares for. The new heart is the alabaster box that Jesus loves.

(2) *We could live holier lives.*—The Church is thus described in the Song of Solomon: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" The holiness of the believer is like the most precious perfume. When a holy believer goes through the world, filled with the Spirit, made more than conqueror, the fragrance fills the room; "'tis as if an angel shook his wings." If the world were full of believers, it would be like a bed of spices; but oh, how few believers carry much of the odour of heaven along with them! How many you might be the means of saving, if you lived a holy, consistent life—if you were evidently a sacrifice bound upon God's altar! Wives might thus, *without the word*, win their husbands, when they see your chaste conversation coupled with fear; parents might in this way save their children, when they saw you holy and happy; children have often thus saved their parents. Servants, adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things; let your light shine before men. The poorest can do this as well as the richest, the youngest as well as the oldest. Oh, there is no argument like a holy life!

(3) *You could seek the salvation of others.*—If you have really been brought to Christ and saved, then you know there is a hell—you know that all the unconverted around you are hastening to it; you

know there is a Saviour, and that He is stretching out His hands all the day long to sinners. Could you do no more to save sinners than you do? Do you do all you can? You say you *pray for them*; but is it not hypocrisy to pray and do nothing? Will God hear these prayers? Have you no fears that prayers without labours are only provoking God? You say you *cannot speak*, you are not learned. Will that excuse stand in the judgment? Does it require much learning to tell fellow-sinners that they are perishing? If their house was on fire, would it require much learning to wake the sleepers?

Begin at home.—Could you not do more for the salvation of those at home? If there are children or servants, have you done all you can for them? Have you done all you can to bring the truth before them, to bring them under a living ministry, to get them to pray and give up sin?

Do you do what you can for your neighbours? Can you pass your neighbours for years together, and see them on the broad way, without warning them? Do you make a full use of tracts, giving suitable ones to those that need them? Do you persuade Sabbath-breakers to go to the house of God? Do you do anything in Sabbath schools? Could you not tell little children the way to be saved? Do you do what you can for the *world*? The field is the world.

(4) *Feed Christ's poor.*—I am far from thinking that the wicked poor should be passed over, but Christ's poor are our brothers and sisters. Do you do what you can for them? In the great day, Christ will say to those on His right hand, "Come ye blessed, for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat." They stand in the place of Christ. Christ does not any more stand in need of Mary's ointment, or Martha's hospitality, or the Samaritan's drink of water. He is beyond the reach of these things, and will never need them more; but He has left many of His brothers and sisters behind in this world, some diseased, some lame, some like Lazarus all covered with sores; and He says, What ye do to them, ye do to me. Do you live plainly, in order to have more to give away? Do you put away vain and gaudy clothes, that you may be able to clothe the naked? Are you thrifty in managing what you have, letting nothing be lost?

II. *Reasons why we should do what we can.*

(1) *Christ has done what He could for us.*—"What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4). He thought nothing too much to do and to suffer for us. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Greater love than this hath no man. *All his life*, between the manger at Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary, was spent in labours and infinite sufferings for us. All that we needed to suffer, He suffered; all that we need to obey, He obeyed. All His life in glory He spends for us. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He is head over all things for us; makes everything in

all worlds work together for our good. It is all but incredible that each person of the Godhead has made Himself over to us to be ours. The Father says, "I am thy God"; the Son, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee"; the Holy Ghost makes us a temple: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Is it much that we should do all we can for Him—that we should give ourselves up to Him who gave Himself for us?

(2) *Satan does all he can.*—Sometimes he comes as a lion—your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; sometimes as a serpent—"as the serpent beguiled Eve"; sometimes as an angel of light. He does all he can to tempt and beguile the saints, leading them away by false teachers, injecting blasphemies and polluted thoughts into their minds, casting fiery darts at their souls, stirring up the world to hate and persecute them, stirring up father and mother against the children, and brother against brother. He does all he can to lead captive wicked men, blinding their minds, not allowing them to listen to the gospel, steeping them in swinish lusts, leading them into despair. When he knows his time is short, he rages all the more. Oh, should not we do all we can, if Satan does all he can?

(3) *We have done all we could the other way.*—This was one of Paul's great motives for doing all he could: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord for putting me into the ministry; for I was a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious." He never could forget how he had persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and this made him as diligent in building it up, and haling men and women to Christ. He preached the faith which once he destroyed. So with Peter: "Let us live the rest of our time in the flesh not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; for the time past of our lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." So with John Newton: "How can the old African blasphemer be silent?" So with many of you: you ran greedily after sin; you were at great pains and cost, and did not spare health, or money, or time, to obtain some sinful gratification. How can you now grudge anything for Christ? Only serve Christ as zealously as you once served the devil.

(4) *Christ will own and reward what we do.*—The labour that Christ blesseth is believing labour. It is not words of human wisdom, but words of faith, that God makes arrows. The word of a little maid was blessed in the house of Naaman the Syrian. "Follow me" was made the arrow to pierce the heart of Matthew. It is all one to God to save, whether with many, or with them that have no might. If you would do all you can, the town would be filled with the fragrance. Christ will reward it. He defended Mary's work of love, and said it should be spoken of over all the world, and it will yet be told in the judgment. A cup of cold water He will not pass over. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

(5) *If you do not do all you can, how can you prove yourself a Christian?* — “Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” You are greatly mistaken if you think that to be a Christian is merely to have certain views, and convictions, and spiritual delights. This is all well; but if it leads not to a devoted life, I fear it is all a delusion. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

III. *Let us answer objections.*

(1) *The world will mock at us.* — Ans. This is true. They mocked at Mary; they called it waste and extravagance; and yet, Christ said it was well done. So, if you do what you can, the world will laugh at you, but you will have the smile of Christ. They mocked at Christ when He was full of zeal; they said He was mad and had a devil. They mocked at Paul, and said he was mad; and so with all Christ’s living members. “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ.” “If ye suffer with Him, ye shall also reign with Him.”

(2) *What can I do? — I am a woman.* — Mary was a woman, yet she did what she could. Mary Magdalene was a woman, and yet she was first at the sepulchre. Phebe was a woman, yet a succourer of many, and of Paul also. Dorcas was a woman, yet she made coats and garments for the poor at Joppa. *I am a child.* — Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God perfects praise. God has often used children in the conversion of their parents.

(3) *I have too little grace to do good.* — “He that watereth others, shall be watered himself.” “The liberal soul shall be made fat.” “It pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell.” There is a full supply of the Spirit to teach you to pray; a full supply of grace to slay your sins and quicken your graces. If you use opportunities of speaking to others, God will give you plenty. If you give much to God’s poor, you shall never want a rich supply. “God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” “Bring all the tithes unto My storehouse, and prove me now herewith.” “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

CHRIST THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6).

IT IS THE SAYING of an old divine, that God often orders it, that when He is in hand with the greatest mercies for us, then we are most of all sinning against Him; which He doth to magnify His love the more.

In the words I have read, we find an example of this. At no time did the heart of Jesus overflow with a tenderer and more sovereign love to His disciples, than when He said, “Let not your heart be troubled.” They were troubled by many things. He had told them that He was going to leave them; He had told them that one should betray Him, that another should deny Him, that they should all be offended because of Him that very night; and perhaps they thought He was going from them in anger. But whatever the cause of their trouble was, Jesus’ bosom was like a vessel full to overflowing, and these words were the overlipping drops of love: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” Surely such words of confiding tenderness were never whispered in this cold world before; and oh, then, think how cold, how dark, how dull is the question with which Thomas breaks in upon the heavenly discourse: “Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?” And yet how condescendingly does Jesus bear with their cold-hearted dulness! How lovingly does He begin the very alphabet of salvation with them, and not only answers, but over-answers Thomas—gives him more than he could ask or think. He asked about the way and the place; but Christ answers: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” Regarding this, then, as a complete description of the gospel salvation, let us go over the different parts of it.

I. *Christ is the Way.*—“I am the way: no man cometh,” etc. The whole Bible bears witness that by nature we have no way to the Father. We are by nature full of sin, and God is by nature infinitely holy—that is, He shrinks away from sin. Just as the sensitive plant, by its very nature, shrinks away from the touch of a human hand, so God, by His very nature, shrinks away from the touch of sin. He is everlastingly separate from sinners; He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

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(1) This was impressively taught to Adam and the patriarchs. As long as Adam walked holily, God dwelt in him, and walked in him, and communed with him; but when Adam fell, "God drove the man out of paradise; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." This flaming sword between the cherubim was a magnificent emblem of God—the just and sin-hating God. In the bush, He appeared to Moses as a consuming fire; in the temple, He appeared between the cherubim in the milder glory of the Shechinah; but here He appeared between the cherubim as a sword—a just and sin-hating God. And I beseech you to remark, that this flaming sword turned *every way*, to keep the way of the tree of life. If it had not turned *every way*—if it had left some footpath unglared across—then Adam might have stolen in by that footpath, and made his own way to the tree of life. But no; whatever avenue he tried—however secret, however narrow, however steep and difficult, however silently he crept along—still this flaming meteor met him, and it seemed to say, "How can man be just with God? by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified." Well might Adam sit down, wearied with the vain search for a pathway into life; for man by nature has no way to the Father.

But Christ says, "I am the way." As He says in Psalm 16, "Thou wilt show Me the path of life." No man could find out this path of life; but Jesus says: "Thou wilt show it Me: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." *Jesus pitied* the poor sons of Adam vainly struggling to find out a way into the paradise of God, and He left the bosom of the Father, just that He might open up a way for us into the bosom of the Father. And how did He do it? Was it by escaping the vigilance of the flaming sword? No; for it turned every way. Was it by exerting His divine authority, and commanding the glittering blade to withdraw? No; for that would have been to dishonour his Father's law instead of magnifying it. He therefore became a man in our stead—yea, became sin. God caused to meet on Him the iniquities of us all. He advanced in our stead to meet that fiery meteor—He fell beneath its piercing blade; for He remembered the word of the prophet, which is written: "Awake, O sword! against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts."

And now, since the glittering blade is bathed in the side of the Redeemer, the guiltiest of sinners—whoever you be, whatever you be—may enter in over His bleeding body, may find access to the paradise of God, to eat of the tree of life, and live forever. Come quickly—doubt not; for He says, "*I am the way.*"

(2) The same fact—that man has by nature no way to the Father—was impressively taught to Moses and the people of Israel.

When God condescended to dwell among the children of Israel, He dwelt peculiarly in the holiest of all—the innermost apartment of

the Jewish temple. There the visible token of His presence rested between the cherubim, at one time described to us as a light inaccessible and full of glory, at another time as a cloud that filled the temple. But this innermost apartment, or holiest of all (or secret place, as it is called in the Psalms), was separated from the holy place by a curtain or veil; and through that veil no man was allowed to pass, lest he should die, except the high priest, who entered in once in the year, not without blood. Now, no picture could express more plainly that the way into the holiest was not made manifest, that no sinful man has any way of coming into the presence of God.

But Jesus says, "I am the way." Jesus was grieved that we were shut out from the holiest of all—from the presence of God; for He knew by experience that in that presence there is fulness of joy. But how did He open the way? Did He pull aside the veil, that we might steal in secretly and easily into the presence of the Father? No; but He offered Himself an offering to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. "He said, It is finished: and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom." It is finished: the punishment of the law is borne, the demands of the law are answered, the way is finished, the veil is rent from the top to the bottom! Not a shred of the dreadful curtain now remains to intercept us. The guiltiest, the vilest sinner of you all, has now liberty to enter in through the rent veil, under the light of Jehovah's countenance—to dwell in the secret of His tabernacle, to behold His beauty, and to inquire in His temple.

And now, my friends, is this your way of coming to the Father? Christ says, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." If, then, you will still keep to your own way, whatever it be—whether it be the way of tears, or penances, or vows of amendment, or hopes that God will not deal strictly—if you will not be warned, you will find in the judgment day that the cherubic sword turned every way, and that you are left a prey to the consuming fire.

But oh, if there be one soul that can find no peace in any self-righteous way—if there be one of you who find that you are lost in yourself—behold, Christ says to you, "I am *the* way," as He says in another place, "I am *the* door." It is a full, free, and open way, and it is a way for sinners. Why wait a moment longer? There was once a partition wall between you and God; but Christ hath cast it down. God was once angry; but His anger is turned away from this blessed path. In Christ He is ever well pleased.

II. *Christ is the Truth.*—The whole Bible, and the whole of experience, bear witness that by nature we are ignorant of *the truth*. No doubt there are many truths which an unconverted man does know. He may know the truths of mathematics and arithmetic—he may know many of the common every-day truths; but still it cannot be said that an unconverted man knows *the truth*, for Christ is the

truth. Christ may be called the key-stone of the arch of truth. Take away the key-stone of an arch, and the whole becomes a heap of rubbish. The very same stones may be there; but they are all fallen, smothered, and confused—without order, without end. Just so take Christ away, and the whole arch of truth becomes a heap of rubbish. The very same truths may be there; but they are all fallen—without coherence, without order, without end. Christ may be called the sun of the system of truth. Take away the sun out of our system, and every planet would rush into confusion. The very same planets would be there; but their conflicting forces would draw them hither and thither, orb dashing against orb in endless perplexity. Just so take Christ away, and the whole system of truth rushes into confusion. The same truths may be in the mind, but all conflicting and jarring in inextricable mazes; for “the path of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.” But let Christ be revealed to an unconverted soul—let it not be merely a man speaking about Christ unto him, but let the Spirit of God reveal Him—and there is revealed, not a truth, but *the truth*. You put the key-stone into the arch of truth; you restore the sun to the centre of the system. All truth becomes orderly and serviceable in that mind.

Now he knows the truth with regard to himself. Did the Son of God really leave the bosom of the Father to bear wrath in our stead?—then I must be under wrath. Did the Lord Jesus become a servant, that He might obey the will of God instead of sinners?—then I must be without any righteousness—a child of disobedience.

Again, knowing Christ, he knows the truth with regard to God. Did God freely give up his Son to the death for us all?—then, if I believe in Jesus, there is no condemnation to me. God is my Father, and God is love.

My friends, have you seen Christ, who is the truth? Has He been revealed to you, not by flesh and blood, but by the Spirit of our God? Then you know how true it is that in Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”—that He is the “Alpha and Omega,” the beginning and the ending of all knowledge. But if you have not seen Christ, then you know nothing yet as you ought to know; all your knowledge is like a bridge without a key-stone—like a system without a sun. What good will it do you in hell that you knew all the sciences in the world, all the events of history, and all the busy politics of your little day? Do you not know that your very knowledge will be turned into an instrument of torture in hell? Oh, how will you wish in that day that you had read your newspaper less and your Bible more—that, with all your getting, you had got understanding—that, with all your knowledge, you had known the Saviour, whom to know is life everlasting!

III. *Christ is the Life.*—The whole Bible bears witness that by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins—that we are as unable to

walk holily in the world, as a dead man is unable to rise and walk.

Both Scripture and experience alike testify that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; and yet it is not a death in which we are wholly inactive, for in it we are said to walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.

This truth is taught us impressively in that vision of the prophet Ezekiel, where he was carried out by the Spirit, and set down in the midst of an open valley full of dry bones; and as he passed by them round about, behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo! they were very dry.

Just such is the view which every child of God gets of the world. The dry bones are very many, and they are very dry; and he asks the same question which God asked of Ezekiel: "Can these bones live?" Oh yes, my friends; and does not experience teach you the same thing? True, the dead cannot know that they are dead; and yet, if the Lord touch your heart, you will find it out. We prophesy to dry bones; for this is the Lord's way—while we prophesy, the breath enters in. *Look back over your life, then.* See how you have walked according to the course of this world. You have always been like a man swimming with the stream—never like a man swimming against the current. *Look into your heart,* and see how it has turned against all the commandments: you feel the Sabbath to be a weariness, instead of calling it a delight and honourable. If ever you tried to keep the commandments of God—if ever you tried to keep your eyes from unlawful desires, your tongue from words of anger or gossiping or bitterness, your heart from malice and envy and covetousness—if ever you have tried this, and I fancy most unconverted men have tried it—if ever you have tried this, did you not find it impossible? It was like raising the dead. Did you not find a struggle against yourself? Oh, how plain that you are dead—not born again!

Marvel not that we say unto you, Ye must be born again. You must be joined to Christ, for Christ *is the life*. Suppose it were possible for a dead limb to be joined into a living body so completely that all the veins should receive the purple tide of living blood—suppose bone to join on to bone, and sinew to sinew, and nerve to nerve—do you not see that that limb, however dead before, would become a living limb? Before, it was cold and stiff and motionless, and full of corruption; now it is warm and pliable, and full of life and motion. It is a living limb, because joined on to that which is life. Or suppose it possible for a withered branch to be grafted into a living vine so completely that all the channels should receive the flow of the generous sap, do you not see that that branch, however dead before, becomes a living branch? Before, it was dry and fruitless and withered; now it is full of sap, of life, and vigour. It is a living branch, for it is joined to the vine, which is its life. Well, then, just in the same way, Christ is the life of every soul that cleaves to Him, He that is joined to the Lord is

one spirit. Is your soul like a dead limb—cold, stiff, motionless, and full of corruption? Cleave you to Christ, be joined to Him by faith, and you shall be one spirit—you shall be made warm and vigorous and full of activity in God's service.

Is your soul like a withered branch—dry, fruitless, and withered, wanting both leaves and fruit? Cleave you to Christ; be joined to Him, and you shall be one spirit. You will find it true that Christ is the life; your life will be hid with Christ in God. You will say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Remember, then, my unbelieving friends, the only way for you to become holy is to become united to Christ. And remember you, my believing friends, that if ever you are relaxing in holiness, the reason is, you are relaxing your hold on Christ. Abide in me, and I in you; so shall ye bear much fruit. Severed from me, ye can do nothing.

ADDRESS AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

THERE IS NO END to a pastor's anxieties. Our first care is to get you into Christ; and next, to keep you from falling. I have a good hope, dearly beloved, that a goodly number of you have this day joined yourselves to the Lord. But now a new anxiety begins—to get you to walk in Christ, to walk after the Spirit. Here we are to tell you of what God our Saviour is able to do for you: *First*, To keep you from falling all the way; *Second*, To present you faultless at the end.

I. *To keep you from falling.*

1. *We are not able to keep you from falling.*—Those that lean on ministers lean on a reed shaken with the wind. When a soul has received saving good through a minister, he often thinks that he will be kept from falling by the same means. He thinks, "Oh, if I had this friend always beside me to warn me, to advise me!" No; ministers are

not always by, nor godly friends. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? We may soon be taken from you, and there may come a famine of the bread. And, besides, our words will not always tell. When temptation and passions are strong, *you* would not give heed to us.

2. *You are not able to keep yourselves from falling.*—At present you know little of the weakness or wickedness of your own heart. There is nothing more deceitful than your estimate of your own strength. Oh, if you saw your soul in all its infirmity; if you saw how every sin has its fountain in your heart; if you saw what a mere reed you are, you would cry, “Lord, hold up my goings.” You may be at present strong; but stop till an inviting company occur; stop till a secret opportunity. Oh, how many have fallen then! At present you feel strong, your feet like hinds’ feet. So did Peter at the Lord’s Table. But stop till this burst of feeling has passed away; stop till you are asked to join in some unholy game; stop till some secret opportunity of sinning all unseen; till some bitter provocation rouses your anger, and you will find that you are weak as water, and that there is no sin that you may not fall into.

3. *Our Saviour-God is able.*—Christ deals with us as you do with your children. They cannot go alone; you hold them: so does Christ by His Spirit. “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms” (Hos. 11:3). Breathe this prayer: “Lord, take me by the arms.” John Newton says, “When a mother is teaching her child to walk on a soft carpet, she will sometimes let it go, and it will fall, to teach it its weakness; but not so on the brink of a precipice.” So the Lord will sometimes let you fall, like Peter on the waters, though not to your injury. The shepherd layeth the sheep on his shoulder; it matters not how great the distance be; it matters not how high the mountains, how rough the path: our Saviour-God is an almighty Shepherd. Some of you have mountains in your way to heaven; some of you have mountains of lusts in your hearts, and some of you have mountains of opposition: it matters not, only lie on the shoulder. He is able to keep you; even in the dark *valley* He will not stumble.

II. *To present you faultless.*

1. *Faultless in righteousness.*—As long as you live in your mortal body, you will be faulty in yourself. It is a soul-ruining error to believe anything else. Oh, if ye would be wise, be often looking beneath the robe of the Redeemer’s righteousness to see your own deformity! It will make you keep faster hold of His robe, and keep you washing in the fountain. Now, when Christ brings you before the throne of God, He will clothe you with His own fine linen, and present you faultless. Oh, it is sweet to me to think how soon you shall be the righteousness of God in Him. What a glorious righteousness that can stand the light of God’s face! Sometimes a garment appears white in dim light: when

you bring it into the sunshine you see the spots. Prize, then, this divine righteousness, which is your covering.

2. *Faultless in holiness.*—My heart sometimes sickens when I think upon the defects of believers; when I think of one Christian being fond of company, another vain, another given to evil speaking. Oh, aim to be holy Christians—bright, shining Christians. The heaven is more adorned by the large bright constellations than by many insignificant stars; so God may be more glorified by one bright Christian than by many indifferent ones. Aim at being that one.

Soon we shall be faultless. He that began will perform it. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. When you lay down this body, you may say, Farewell, lust, forever; farewell, my hateful pride; farewell, hateful selfishness; farewell strife and envying; farewell being ashamed of Christ. Oh, this makes death sweet indeed! Oh, long to depart and to be with Christ!

III. *To Him be glory.*

1. Oh, if anything has been done for your soul, give Him *the glory*! Give no praise to others; give all praise to Him. 2. And give Him *the dominion* too. Yield yourselves unto Him, soul and body.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ROBERT MURRAY McCHEYNE:

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FOR OTHER SERMONS BY ROBERT MURRAY McCHEYNE:

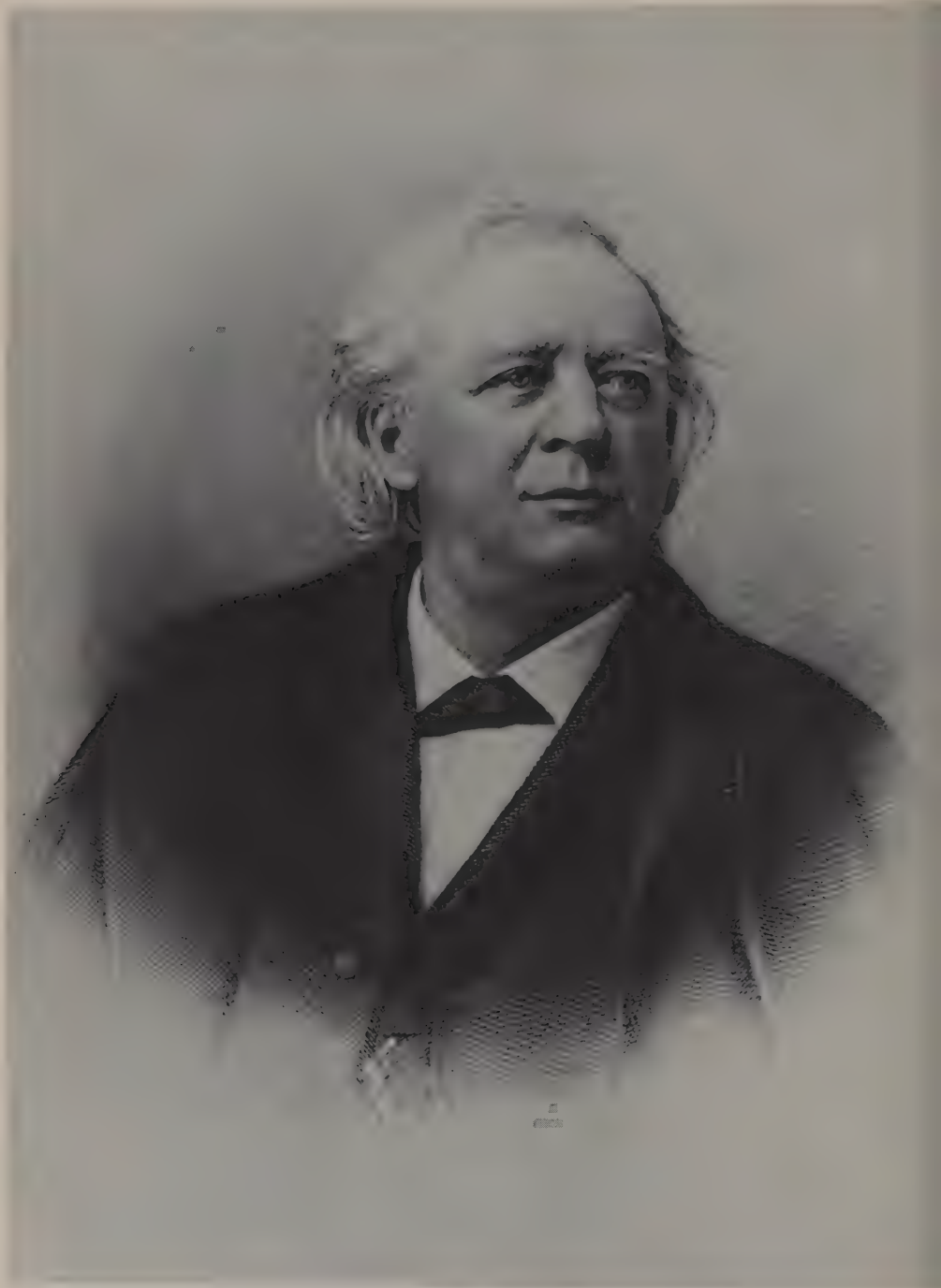
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HENRY WARD BEECHER

1813 - 1887



HENRY WARD BEECHER, an engraving by H. B. Hall's Sons, New York, from *A Biography of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher* by Wm. C. Beecher and Rev. Samuel Scoville (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1888), frontispiece.

HENRY WARD BEECHER

- 1813 *Born June 24, 1813, in Litchfield, Connecticut*
- 1825 *Family moved to Boston*
- 1834 *Graduated from Amherst College*
- 1837 *Completed work in Lane Theological Seminary and became pastor of Presbyterian church in Lawrenceburgh, Indiana*
- 1839 *Pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana*
- 1847 *Pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church of Brooklyn, New York*
- 1861 *Became editor of the Independent*
- 1863 *Visit to England to defend Union cause*
- 1865 *Gave oration for raising the flag at Fort Sumter*
- 1870 *Became editor and part-owner of the Christian Union*
- 1872 *Delivered first of the lectures on preaching at Yale University*
- 1874 *Charge of immorality by Tilton against Beecher*
- 1887 *Died March 8*

POLITICAL ORATOR, social reformer, renowned preacher, pastor of a huge urban church, editor of successful journals—Henry Ward Beecher was all of these and more. He was rated by his contemporaries as one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, preacher of his day.

In 1872 H. R. Haweis wrote about Beecher: "It would be no compliment to call Henry Ward Beecher the American Spurgeon. He may be that, but he is more. If we can imagine Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. John Bright with a cautious touch of Mr. Maurice and a strong tincture of the late F. W. Robertson—if, I say, it is possible to imagine such a compound being brought

up in New England, and at last securely fixed in a New York pulpit, we shall get a product not unlike Henry Ward Beecher."¹

LIFE AND TIMES

Henry Ward Beecher was born on June 24, 1813, in Litchfield, Connecticut, one of thirteen children. His father was Lyman Beecher, famous preacher, theologian, and educator. Seven sons and six daughters were born to the Lyman Beecher household. One sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Family influences made a significant impression on young Henry. His father—a stalwart, independent, aggressive minister—was one of the best-known preachers in America. He imparted to his son a robust nature, a courageous spirit, and a devotion to duty. His mother died when Henry was very small and his father soon remarried. His stepmother was a devoted and pious Christian, and she conveyed a powerful moral force to the children.

One of the most significant influences in his life was a Negro servant of the family, Charles Smith. Beecher slept in the same room with Smith and would often listen to him pray and read his Bible at night. He developed a strong affection for the servant. Beecher indicated that it was from Smith that he first heard the Bible truly read.

In addition to his home life, Henry Ward Beecher was influenced by his surroundings. He enjoyed the New England countryside. From his walks through the small town and surrounding areas he developed a great fondness for nature which was frequently revealed in his sermons.

While a boy, he suffered an infection in his throat which seriously affected his speech; many felt that he would never be able to speak distinctly. A teacher of elocution, Mr. J. E. Lovell, worked with him, and over a period of time developed the boy's speech to unusual distinctness. Later in his ministry his voice became one of his most significant assets. It was said that Beecher had the range from a bird-note to a thunderclap and could express every shade of thought and feeling.

As a young boy Beecher wanted to join the navy. His father wisely guided him in school to study mathematics, navigation,

1. *Contemporary Review* 19 (1872), as quoted in *Henry Ward Beecher* by Lyman Abbott (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Co., 1887), p. 411.

and other such subjects. During this time a revival broke out and Henry was converted. He never again mentioned wanting to go to sea. From that time his goal was the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

After graduating from Amherst College in 1834 he entered Lane Theological Seminary. There his theological career was shaped by a number of men, including his own father. During this time he had a significant spiritual experience which changed his whole life; he continued to draw upon this experience for strength during the rest of his life.

Following seminary, in 1837, he became pastor of his first church, a Presbyterian church in Lawrenceburgh, Indiana. Two years later he moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, and pastored there for eight years. In 1847, a small group of persons in Brooklyn, New York, called him to pastor the Plymouth Congregational Church. He remained in this pastorate for the rest of his life.

When Beecher began his work in Plymouth Church the church had twenty-one members. Toward the close of Beecher's pastorate, the membership totaled almost 2,500. Nearly 4,600 people had been added to the church during his ministry. It was not uncommon on a Sunday morning for over 3,000 persons to crowd into the auditorium for the morning service. Beecher advised his morning congregation not to come to the Sunday evening service; he told them that one sermon a Sunday was all they could profitably manage. The evening congregation was almost entirely different from the morning crowd: it was made up largely of persons who were not members of the church. On many Sundays he preached to at least 5,000 different people. Men were especially attracted to his ministry. The church was so famous that on Sunday the streetcar conductors, instead of calling the name of the street, would sing out "Henry Ward Beecher" when they came to Plymouth Church; a few of them would simply say, "Beecher Station!" People came from all over the nation to hear Beecher.

Under his leadership the church carried out a many-faceted ministry. Mission stations, schools, benevolent services, prayer meetings, and other activities were part of the life of the church.

The appeal of Beecher rested in his character as well as his preaching. He was a bold, sympathetic, energetic man; he had natural humor and sparkled with wit. He cared deeply for nature and frequently abandoned the city for the countryside. He had an imaginative and creative mind. Not only did he appeal to

the intellectual, but he also appealed to the common man and to the emotions of all.

He was not content merely to be a preacher; he had many interests and was involved in many activities. His radical concern for social issues led him into numerous controversies. Deeply opposed to alcoholic beverages and to slavery, he pounced on these two social problems as a cat on a mouse. Since drinking was exceedingly popular—even among the clergy—and abolitionism was not widely accepted even in the North, he won many enemies by his attitudes.

Beecher also championed the cause of voting rights for women. He served as president of the American Suffrage Association and was one of the organizers of the Equal Rights Association in 1865. In 1860 he delivered a women's rights speech at Cooper Institute, New York, which was used as a suffrage tract. Beecher took up an offering in Plymouth Church for Susan Anthony, famous suffrage leader.

Certain issues, such as poverty and the need for an overhaul in the economic system, he left relatively untouched. He voiced opposition to labor unions: "Labor-unions are the worst form of despotism that ever were bred by the human mind."² And in the face of mass suffering caused by low wages and unemployment Beecher declared, "The man who cannot live on bread and water is not fit to live."³

Some biographers claim that Beecher was not really a leader in social reform and that he merely espoused popular causes. Paxton Hibben said of him, "He was not in advance of his day, but precisely abreast of his day—the drum major's part in more than one sense."⁴ Others view Beecher as a reformer ahead of his time: "Beecher held that whatever concerned the good of man was his subject matter; thus he was interested in the social implications of the Gospel, and in this he was ahead of such men as Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, and Harry F. Ward."⁵

He carried his views from the pulpit into other areas of communication. During his life he was editor of at least three peri-

2. Paxton Hibben, *Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait* (New York: Press of the Readers Club, 1942), p. 296.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

4. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

5. William Norwood Brigance, ed., *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1943), p. 283.

odicals: first he edited the *Western Farmer and Gardener*; then the *New York Independent*; perhaps the best known of the publications he edited was the *Christian Union*. In this periodical he consistently set forth his views on religious issues and social problems.

In 1863 he went to England—supposedly for a rest. While there he became embroiled in controversy over the English stand on the American Civil War. He spoke throughout England in defense of the Union cause. At first the English received him with great hostility since Great Britain had been supporting the Confederacy. But Beecher soon won the British to his side. When he returned to the United States, England had shifted from its pro-South stance to a neutral, and perhaps even pro-North, position. Beecher was not the only factor in this change of opinion, but he was a significant one.

Concerning this tour of England, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote:

After a few months absence he returns to America, having finished a more remarkable embassy than any envoy who has represented us in Europe since Franklin pleaded the cause of the young republic at the Court of Versailles. He kissed no royal hand, he talked with no courtly diplomatists, he was the guest of no titled legislator, he had no official existence. But through the heart of the people he reached nobles, ministers, courtiers, the throne itself. . . .⁶

Beecher was pro-Union primarily because the Union was anti-slavery. From his youth he had been deeply opposed to slavery. He spoke against it and wrote against it at every opportunity. Never afraid, he pleaded the case for abolition when it was an unpopular cause as well as when it gained general favor in the North.

In 1872 Beecher delivered the first series of lectures in the Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching, Yale Divinity School, established by Henry W. Sage, deacon and trustee of Plymouth Church. Of this event Paxton Hibben wrote:

It was more than a triumph, this honor. Old Dr. Beecher had sent his unpromising son to Amherst, instead of

6. *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1864), as quoted in Lyman Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher*, p. 404.

Yale, because he was afraid the youth had neither brains nor character enough for his own Alma Mater. And here he was teaching at Yale, in a chair named for Lyman Beecher. The joke was plainly on Lyman.⁷

His ministry was marred by one dark cloud of scandal. A friend and editor of a paper that Beecher had once edited, a Mr. Tilton, accused him of making improper advances to Mrs. Tilton. Before the charge was formally made in 1874, many whispered rumors had been spread. Court cases, investigations by ecclesiastical bodies, and a general airing through the press followed the accusation. At every turn and on every count Beecher was cleared. Nevertheless, the scandal did him no good. The amazing thing is not that Beecher was involved in the scandal; the truly astounding fact is that in spite of his bold, radical, and forthright nature, he was involved in only one serious conflict such as this.⁸

Beecher spent his last years in writing, preaching, lecturing, and working for social reform. Always interested in political issues—he had helped form the Republican party in 1856 and campaigned for John C. Fremont and Abraham Lincoln—Beecher left his party and supported Grover Cleveland for the presidency in 1884 to bring about reform in government.

In addition to his preaching at Plymouth Church he carried out a heavy schedule of lecturing. He spoke on a wide variety of subjects including “Communism,” “Wastes and Burdens of Society,” and “The Reign of the Common People.” In 1886 his lecture manager persuaded him to lecture in England during the summer. The strain of eighty-four appearances took its toll. In March of 1887 he suffered a stroke and died. Over forty thousand persons filed passed his coffin in tribute.

Beecher tackled every significant issue of his day—and his day was a day of revolution, crisis, and rapid change. In every significant field of human endeavor there was upheaval.

7. Hibben, p. 239.

8. For accounts of the trial which are friendly to Beecher, consult Thomas W. Knox, *Life and Works of Henry Ward Beecher* (Hartford, Conn: Hartford Publishing Co., 1889), chaps. 19 and 20; and Lyman Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1903), chap. 12. For unfriendly accounts see Mark Van Doren, *An Autobiography of America* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1929), pp. 648–62; and Paxton Hibben, *Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait* (New York: Doubleday & Co., George H. Doran Co., 1927).

In the area of religion, liberalism was advancing. The scientific method had affected the approach to biblical study and theology. Many tried to adjust the beliefs of religion to the findings of science; others held to a literal interpretation of the Bible. Beecher spoke forthrightly on issues of theology, though he did not consider himself a theologian. During his ministry he was increasingly affected by the scientific approach to theology, and in his latter days he seemed less and less to rely upon Scripture.

It was a day of scientific explosion. This was true especially in the areas of communications and transportation: in 1819 the first steamship crossed the Atlantic, in 1825 the first railroad line was put in operation, in 1835 the telegraph began to send messages, and in 1851 an underwater cable linked two bodies of land. The world was shrinking and Beecher realized that many of the old ways of doing things would never stand in a new and smaller world. He tried new ideas and approaches.

One of the most explosive issues involved the new theory of evolution. In 1859 Darwin published *The Origin of the Species by the Means of Natural Selection*. The controversies which this book set off were widespread and highly emotional. Beecher sided with the evolutionist position and attempted to reconcile the Christian faith with it; for this stand he lost many followers.

The world of politics was also in turmoil during Beecher's life. It was the day of Napoleon, Waterloo, and numerous wars in Europe. It was a time of the wars of liberation in South America and the revolutions which followed in that troubled continent. It was a period of war in his own country, the American Civil War of 1861-65.

The nineteenth century was a period of revolution in the economic order. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing. Reaction to capitalism was developing, primarily in the form of socialism. In 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels penned the *Communist Manifesto*. The American economy had long been in the grips of slavery. Sentiment was growing to abolish slavery; but many, both in the North and in the South, opposed the abolition move. Beecher refused to be silent on the slavery issue. He became deeply involved in what many regarded as purely an economic issue; but to him, it was also a moral and religious issue.

Henry Ward Beecher's greatness rests not only in his ability as a preacher but also in his courageous devotion to causes of righteousness. A contemporary of Abraham Lincoln, Queen

Victoria, Napoleon Bonaparte, Charles Darwin, and Karl Marx, he was part of the same tumultuous world which made their names famous. An admirer wrote about Henry Ward Beecher, "Let it be remembered that he has in many regards changed the current of religious thought; that he has changed the manner of the young ministers of his day, that he has affected public questions, and that he has had a greater influence on the religious life of America than any other man."⁹

PREACHING AND SERMONS

Henry Ward Beecher was an amazing man—few preachers have ever been called by so many different names. Beecher has been called "a many-sided genius"; "the Shakespeare of the American pulpit"; "an anti-Calvinistic, theistic evolutionist"; "unscriptural"; "a Puritan realist"; an example of "homiletic lawlessness"; an "immoral scoundrel"; and a man who has contributed more than any other American preacher to the production of a modern type of American preaching. What is the truth about Henry Ward Beecher?

To begin with, he was not "an immoral scoundrel." He may have been a scoundrel—particularly in the minds of some of the more orthodox—but charges of immorality were proved false. There is no doubt that he was unconventional, but in his life stance that is the nature of an innovator. His theology was expressly weak, by anyone's standards—at least at some points in some sermons—but he could scarcely be termed a heretic. And as for his "homiletic lawlessness," he was rewriting the book on preaching. Unique, radical, creative: these words best describe Beecher. What forces produced such a man?

In the early part of his ministry he felt frustrated. During those discouraging days at Indianapolis he said, "For the first three years I did not make a single sinner wink. . . . I went to bed every Sunday night with the vow that I would buy a farm and quit the ministry."¹⁰ Nevertheless, he studied hard, especially the old English preachers—Howe, Sherlock, Edwards, Butler, and primarily Barrow and South. South became his model in the handling of texts and in style. Much of the unity of purpose

9. Edward Eggleston, "A New Year's at Beechers," *Hearth and Home*, as quoted in Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher*, p. 436.

10. Arthur S. Hoyt, *The Pulpit and American Life* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921), p. 121.

that can be seen in the sermons of Beecher is due to the influence of South, but Beecher far outdistanced South as a creative influence in preaching.

Beecher's close friendship with the Negro servant of his family also influenced his preaching. His pulpit became a strong force for the freedom and elevation of the Negro race, and no one can doubt that this friendship marked the beginning of Beecher's broadening interest into social concerns.

The bitter and unjustifiable attacks upon his father for heresy, as well as the jealousies and bickerings within the divisions in the church, caused a distaste in Beecher for theology. He was wholly adverse to systematic theology and often made it a matter of ridicule. The conflict between Old School and New School Presbyterianism that raged about him in his younger days gave Beecher an aversion to questions of doctrine and, indeed, to all abstract questions in preaching.

He was turned toward ethical subjects. The day in which he lived might have been a time that needed doctrinal preaching, but that subject was not congenial to the personality of Henry Ward Beecher. The only truly divisive theological issue which grasped his attention was the theory of evolution. But even this issue appealed to him because of its involvement with ethics.

If his day was an apt time for theological involvement, it was even more a day for ethical concern, and that became Beecher's great crusade. This country has produced only two or three preachers who could begin to equal him in a thoughtful presentation of political ethics—and all of those were produced in the twentieth century. Beecher handled ethical subjects in a masterful way. From the beginning he seemed to have an interest in practical life, social welfare, the problems of temperance, the cause of the slave. He preached fearlessly and plainly but from such a biblical foundation and with such understanding of others that many who would otherwise have been enemies became disciples.

Of course many times he aroused intense hatreds and caused divisions instead of reconciliations, but no one could have spoken the truth more forcefully. If he had been more conventional in his style and manner, he might have influenced some who otherwise regarded him as theologically and culturally suspect; but then the question must be raised whether Beecher would have had the same effectiveness.

While in Indianapolis, Beecher spoke out against slavery and

other social problems. In the presence of the judges and members of the Supreme Court, he preached two sermons on slavery which were said to have gone like a bomb through the congregation. He did in the pulpit what his sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, did through fiction. It was also in Indianapolis that he delivered his famous course of lectures to young men entitled, "Industry and Idleness, Dishonesty, Gamblers and Gambling; and Kindred Themes."

When he accepted the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, Beecher made plain his position on social issues in his first sermon. He announced his intention to "utter with no bated breath his own views on war, on temperance, and on slavery." He more than made good on all of these promises. Whatever else may have disappointed the members of Plymouth Congregation, particularly with regard to his interest in theological controversy or devotional life, they certainly felt no lack of social concern. That was Beecher's greatest strength. His flamboyant personality was well suited to the task. He had the ability to arouse emotions, and that ability was never more in evidence than when he spoke concerning the injustice to the American Negro. And though the temperance cause has been long out of favor, nonetheless its most eloquent spokesman was Henry Ward Beecher.

Beecher saw slavery and drink as great moral evils. He thundered against both and his persuasiveness was incredible. We find it hard now to imagine people with deep-seated prejudices on both subjects changing their lives after hearing a sermon by Beecher, but history records not one such case, but countless incidents of this kind of conversion.

Beecher's greatest skill—one not common even today—was his ability to adjust the high ideals of the Christian religion to the daily strife. He has been described as a Puritan idealist who was able to transform his idealism into practical common sense. He had an unfailing humanity and an ability to understand the ordinary man. His personality added charm and power to his pulpit utterance. His imagination was creative and colorful. This descriptive ability was combined with an almost prophetic intuition.

The slavery issue, for example, seems clear enough to us today: we wonder how anyone could have supported it. But in the confused economic and moral climate of Beecher's day that decision was not so easy. Beecher is to be commended

for his precise application of the principles of the gospel to the practical issues of the Civil War era.

Technically, his homiletical ability is seen primarily in maintaining the unity of his theme within the sermon. During those early days of study in Indianapolis, Beecher began to discover that if a sermon is to be effective it must have a central theme. It must attain to a specific objective in the preacher's mind. He felt that the sermon was not to be an end in itself, but rather a means to an end.

Beecher would never preach a sermon on a given subject unless it was fresh in his mind. He prepared his Sunday morning sermons after breakfast and his evening sermons after tea. In his study he thought out the result he wished to reach; then he made outline notes of the steps by which he proposed to reach it.

Beecher excelled in relating biblical principles to contemporary issues. He was criticized for being loose in his handling of Scripture; in some sermons that criticism was justified. But he refused to indulge himself in technical lectures or intricate exegesis wholly unrelated to human life. Beecher chose a specific, useful sermon theme and followed it closely. It is probably true that he usually chose his theme first and then sought scriptural foundation for it; but that is not an error so long as the intent of Scripture is not warped to suit the subject. If Beecher is at fault anywhere in his interpretation, it is in his steady use of the Scripture analogically, or at least indirectly, rather than directly. Sometimes he seemed to go out of his way to find an analogy from his text when a plain, direct application would have been superior.

Another fault in his preaching was clearly a lack of the pastoral note. Beecher was so preoccupied with the national issues of his day that he neglected to be as helpful about man's personal needs. Under the circumstances, however, that fault seems understandable, if not altogether excusable. The country as a whole needed an ethical voice such as Beecher's, and it is hard to fault him for his oversights.

Sermons

A SERMON TO YOUNG MEN

“I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14).

I HAVE BEEN REQUESTED to preach the first of a series of Sabbath-night discourses before the Young Men's Christian Association of Brooklyn; and it seems fitting that I should address to them these words of John, which were originally applied to those who, like them, by faith in Christ, had overcome the temptations incident to youth, and to the circumstances in which they dwelt; and who were strong, not simply by the strength that the young have, but because the Word of God abided in them—who were strong by their religious faith, and by their purposes of usefulness.

Dangers attend every comer into this life, by whatever door he enters. Born in the city or in the country, amid wealth or in poverty, still man must meet his lot, beat down temptation, and reach safety through the experience of struggles and sufferings. All places will have their trials and burdens; but all places are not alike dangerous. The chances of reaching manhood in health, and with good repute, under circumstances of moderate prosperity, vary widely in different places. The chances of health and worthy manhood are far greater to one born and reared in the country than to one born and reared in a city. They are far greater in places which are christianly cultivated than in immoral neighbourhoods and ignorant districts. There is not only much for which we should be thankful to God in the gifts which we inherit of body and of mind, but it is no mean occasion of thanksgiving that we were born in some places rather than in others—for it makes a difference as long as we live as to our chances.

If we were left to choose, it would be better that children should be born and reared in the country; but we cannot help ourselves. Many must be born in cities, if the air is not good, if health is punier, and if the nerves and brain are prematurely excited.

Reprinted from Henry Ward Beecher, *Forty-Eight Sermons*, vol. 1 (London: R. D. Dickinson, 1871), pp. 39–53.

If we could choose, we would delay the coming of men to cities from the country till their frames were consolidated, till their education was completed, till their habits were formed and settled; but that cannot be. They will come immature, unformed, and we must take things as we find them. We must seek to make the best of what is, to diminish the evils and to augment the benefits.

Consider the influx of young men to our cities, and the causes of it.

In the first place, there is an imperative demand for vast numbers of young men to carry forward all the processes of society, that is so active and so intense in cities. Business of every kind needs them. Whatever may be thought of men's doing work that is better fitted for women than for them, it will long be the case that men will perform most of the duties of business in cities. Offices will swarm with them. Stores, and banks, and brokers, and insurance companies will want them. Every profession will demand them. All manufacturing places, every shop, and all industrial processes need them, and call for them. Not more do all the roots of trees and grasses draw for moisture in the soil, than do the roots of business suck up the strength, and quickness, and elasticity of youth. And how vast or how various is the round of that business no man can conceive, who has only looked at the outer phases of life, and not upon the interior workings and throbbings of it.

Where, however, there is a real need, there will always be an exaggerated conception in the country, which will induce a rush to the city out of proportion to the real want, making young men too plenty, and therefore cheap. And it is a bad thing when men are cheap.

In the distance, to the inexperienced country youth, the city is a wonderful and awe-inspiring place. He has heard of its wealth, and to him it is immeasurable. He has heard of its splendours, and they dazzle his imagination. He has heard of its pleasures, and he can scarcely conceive of its enjoyments. He has heard of its curiosities till his imagination runs riot. Those that last year worked in coarse clothes by his side come home in an untimely hour this year so finely dressed, and such gentlemen, that the poor farmer's boy despises his hard hands in comparison with the white hands of the new comers, and longs for an open door by which to leave his labour and drudgery, and rush upon the career of a gentleman in the city. It is a sad thing to see an honest man ashamed of toil, and coveting the lily-white rather than the homely brown which the sun makes on one's skin.

The idea of making a fortune is one which our American youths are particularly alive to. In other lands there is a pride of following the father's course, or there is contentment with the humble place where one is born. This is almost unknown among us. It is peculiarly American not to be satisfied with anything. Whatever we have gained is but that step by which we are prepared to take the next step. Enterprise, Progress—these are the American mottoes; and children are early taught to feel that they must better their condition. There is much in

it. I do not know that it should be changed. Yet, there are incidental evils accompanying it. The expectation of bettering one's condition may be vague and unregulated. It may not be founded upon knowledge. It may be largely made up of hope and conceit. And young men look forward to a wonderful prosperity, to come they know not how. They go out to seek their fortune. That fortune is somehow to fall from the clouds, or to drift in upon them by the waves or the winds, or to spring from the street, or to be wrought out of their brain. Nobody has yet succeeded in producing a universal conviction among the young that there is a natural law of fortune. Fortune is not chance-work. It is the work of God's law. It is regulated. It is as definitely marked out as anything in nature. And yet, all through the land there is an impression that you catch a fortune as boys catch butterflies, by deftly throwing a net over them.

But there is a law of God, whether it be in getting wealth or knowledge, reputation or skill. And the cases in which fortune comes by good luck are as few in cities as on farms. Few conceive, or are taught to conceive, that, by a law of God as fundamental as the law of gravitation, and as universal as human society, success in life is the equivalent of industry, knowledge, prudence, and perseverance, and not the result of chance. The exceptions are few, and rare, and occasional, in which it would be found to come from anything in the nature of real luck. It is the effect of definite causes; and happiness would make great strides if there could be a conviction settled on the hearts of the young throughout the land, that to make one's fortune means to give a fair equivalent of thought, or skill, or labour, for that fortune. For men go out to hunt their fortune; to fire it upon the wing; to take it as it runs through the forest. They mean to find it already made. They do not understand that they must make it themselves, if they are to have it. Ten thousand young hearts are to-day looking at New York as the goal of their ambition, without asking whether they have health to bear its strains; without pausing to consider whether they have virtue to withstand its temptations; without troubling themselves to ascertain whether they have the nerve to maintain themselves in the midst of its competition; without giving a moment's thought to the question as to whether they have a natural fitness for its duties. They see only the great and glowing picture of their fancy, and by night and by day they think that all would be well if they could but rid themselves of their country clogs, and enter the Elysian fields of city life. This vision attracts multitudes, as by and by it will mock them.

Besides these causes, that draw hither so many more than are wanted of young men, there are more legitimate ones.

The city has opportunities for some kinds of education that are not elsewhere to be found. The great universities in Europe are in cities. The best medical schools and law schools are in or near cities. Art schools are found nowhere else but in cities, or nowhere else as well

as there. In cities are found the collections of paintings, and the best architecture. Concerts, and musical opportunities of every sort, are found in cities. Here, also, lectures of learned men are given. Here associations for the development of science exist. Here men meet, bringing each his portion of treasure. In every department abound thousands and thousands of advantages for those that seek culture. There are many that go to a city as to a great university. It is a living encyclopaedia. It is a world in miniature. It touches human want on every side. It furnishes men with motives in every single faculty. It supplies more privileges, and more instrumentalities, for those who know how to avail themselves of them, than any otherwhere. There assemble men of all climes, and of all gifts. There one finds at hand all incitements which reach the human soul, either with good or with evil. Like a drum, the city rolls the sound of its industry out, mustering the youth of all nations with great haste to its ranks. Its voice goes forth like an imperative command. Its places are full. There are always more men within its borders than can find employment. They crowd upon each other. And yet, others are coming. Every important position is occupied, and yet there are hundreds that are without positions. All the great standing avocations are more than full—particularly those that require little manual labour. Still, more are pressing from the country, and seeking an illusive fortune in the city. Many die. Many drift away. Thousands sink down, crushed like grapes under the feet of the wine-treaders. And what then? Youth is hopeful. More still are trooping hither. Wealth is still thought better than competence. Ambition is still stronger than contentment. Happiness is still sought, not in the rounds of benevolent duty, but in incitements and intense stimulants. And so, every year, there come new caravans, processions, of young pilgrims to our great cities, that to thousands and thousands are great shambles.

Oh, if I had a voice that could speak conviction to the young, I would cry out over every village and over every farm, "Abide at home, and seek not the unequal encounter of a city life. Let the leaves still hush you to sleep that hushed your fathers to sleep, and let the sun shine upon your brown skin that shone upon your fathers' skin. Seek intelligence, and knowledge, and usefulness, and seek them where you are. Let the city, if it needs you, come and find you. Let the city seek you, and not you the city. Dispel the illusion, and its glory, and its power, and the lying hopes with which it beguiles you." Blessed are they that, being born in the country, know enough to stay there!

But since this is not the case with us—since we are in the city, and surrounded by tens of thousands of the young—the next best thing that we can do is to consider the perils that are the most imminent, and some of the methods by which these perils may be averted, and by which the young may be rescued from them.

I count as the greatest loss that the young can sustain in coming

hither, the loss of home, as I count as the greatest blessing which the young can enjoy to be that training which a good home affords. Some there are to whom home is nothing but a grievance, and whose remembrance of home is a remembrance of sorrow. Let us believe that there are few such. Let us believe that in this happy land by far the greatest number have occasion all their life long to look back with thanksgiving to the experience and the memories of home, and that this word rings out pleasure to them as long as they are able to utter it or hear it uttered. Home is God's natural training-ground. It has its laws, its restraints, and its compensations. It has its duties, its penalties, and its rewards. Although it is not omnipotent, though it often fails, yet, on the whole, it holds the young everywhere with a most salutary influence. And when young men go from home to the city, they are fortunate if they have relatives and friends to whom they may go, who will give them, if not a father's home, yet a home, who will watch for them and love them, and who will lay upon them the same restraints to which they have been accustomed, perhaps even with a wiser hand than those from whom they have just parted.

They next are to be congratulated that find families who, though not kindred, have wisdom, and kindness, and benevolence, and who act toward them the part of benefactors. It may seem very little to you that the young man who came to your house became speedily an object of your solicitude, that you gave your evening thought to him, and that you sought to make your house a home to him. He may pass from under your roof, and he may never express in this world the gratitude that he feels toward you; but the time is coming when all the secrets of hearts shall be revealed; and then God will make known to you that not the least useful in life were those that succoured the young that for the time being were put into their care. Persons that are working under such circumstances are working for eternity.

But vast numbers are thrust upon utterly unhomelike places. It must needs be so. There was a time, in primitive periods, when the apprentice belonged to the employer's family, when the merchant took to his own house his few clerks; but the change of business, and the multiplication of men in stores and shops, make this no longer possible, as it used to be; and young men find their places as best they can. Some must sleep in stores and some in lofts, and some in places not tempting to the fancy; and even their food they must obtain in ways utterly diverse from the habitudes of home. They *board*. Blessed are they to whom that word brings sweet suggestions! Many and many there are, who are, by the barrenness of all their methods of living, made to feel unwholesome, abnormal attractions, full of danger to their morals. They are weary of work. They are without the natural restraints of home society. They are homesick—and if there is any sickness that is as bad as that, I have never experienced it. They crave kindness and sympathy. They are without any conscious place for their

roots to grow; they sleep by night where they work by day; they catch their food merely for the sake of eating. And we never know what the refinements of home are till we eat thus. It is the most animal of all things to eat. And yet we never suspect it. So have Christian refinements and household virtues made the table to be the very centre of sweet intercourse, that we gather about it to feed the soul more than to feed the body. And we do not find this out till we come to go away from home, and are deprived of home blessings. Then, when there is nobody to talk to, and nobody to ask a blessing, and it is only mouth and bread, and mouth and meat, we see how poor is that act which is so precious as it is seen in the household.

It is under such circumstances that the young are easily influenced by either the good or the bad. Those who show them kindness win them, no matter what their character may be. In these hours when they feel wearied, and homeless, and stripped of the things to which they have been accustomed, and when they hunger for fellowship and sympathy, the man that lays his hand upon them first will be apt to take possession of them. If he is a bad man, he will ruin them. If he is a good man, he will save them.

Let us look at a few points of danger that develop under such circumstances in cities.

First, of course, is the danger that society will lead the young man through kindness into dissipation, and wasteful indulgences and pleasures, at the risk of destroying his morals, his health, and his industrious habits, and of soon setting him adrift from good society, and sweeping him into that great flock where distress and death shoot all their bolts. The very qualities that most fit a man to be loved and to be useful are the very qualities that make him an easy prey to dissipation. I mean sympathy, and yearning for companionship, and warm-heartedness. A cold nature, that is stern, that proposes to itself outward prosperity, that looks with a stony eye upon indulgences, and that does not drink, nor smoke, nor turn aside from the strictest habits of temperance—such a nature will not hurt. There is not anything to spoil in it. There is no juice, and nothing to ferment. But the heart, gleeful and imitative, that loves and wants to be loved, and that is sending out all the time as many tendrils as a vine—that ferments; it is easily tempted; it readily yields; it recovers with difficulty, and with shame, and mortification, and remorse, where it recovers at all; and in multitudes of instances it goes little by little steadily downward. The good spoil easy, as sweet easily ferments. This is the first great danger that the young encounter in coming to cities. It is the more dangerous because in the beginning dissipations are always guileful. They seek to render themselves beautiful—beautiful to the eye, beautiful to the ear, beautiful to every sense. They come under all forms of sweet persuasion. There is nothing more deceitful than the earlier paintings of those courses whose ends are death. "There is a

way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." That is true still, and it will be true as long as the world stands.

I must here specialize one of the dangers which beset the young. I mean the danger of drinking. This is a national vice. We are proud of our Anglo-Saxon blood; but I think that liquor is a part of that blood. It may have other good qualities; but drunkenness has been the historic vice of the national stock to which we are proud to belong. And in all questions which relate to temperance, the use of wine, and such things, we must remember that there is a stock-tendency in us toward excess in drinking; and that that tendency is stronger in our nation than in almost any other, because we love excitement in proportion as we are excitable. In proportion as our very atmosphere, all our institutions, and the hurrying nature of our work, give us stimulus, we crave other stimulus; and in this land less than in any other on the face of the globe do men drink because they like drink. An Englishman drinks because he loves his beer; a Frenchman sips his wines because he loves them; but our men turn out their brandy, and bolt it down, rinsing the mouth with water afterward, as they would throw fuel upon a fire. They want flame. They do not care for taste. They are putting on steam. It is for a practical purpose; it is for excitement that they drink. The tendency may spring from passion, it may begin with excitement, the first steps of it may be shame-faced imitation; but soon the subject of it begins to partake of the national character, to form the national habits, and to feel the need of excitement. And the necessity for excitement will always provoke men to greater and greater indulgence. And in America, drinking invariably has the presumption of going to excess. Other nations may be moderate; but is because they are *other* nations. It may be that wine cures a Frenchman of intemperance; but I do not think that it will cure a New England Yankee of intemperance. We want excitement, and we seek excitement; and drinking is dangerous because we belong to the nation that we do, and because we are under the influences that we are under.

I must be permitted to specialize still another danger under the general head of dissipation—one that you are not accustomed to hear spoken of in the pulpit. I mean the danger of using tobacco. Do not think that I propose to deliver an indiscriminate tirade of abuse against this practice. I wish to speak moderately, and to give the result of my reflections founded upon much observation. I do not deny that there are many temperaments that seem to be able to use tobacco all their life long with comparatively little inconvenience—to themselves. I do not mean that every young man who addicts himself to chewing or smoking will of necessity take on other vices, or let this habit run to excess. But we are a nervous people. Everything in the economy of our society tends to develop the brain and the nervous

system unduly. Now, as a matter of fact, it is true that among such a people smoking is apt to lead to thirst and drinking. Not always, not necessarily; but frequently, and naturally. The cup and the cigar are well acquainted with each other. The use of tobacco always tends to waste the nerve-force and the brain-force; and in thousands of cases there can be no question but that it squanders life by leakage right from the centre. And you do not know whether you are the one in five that will be poisoned and prematurely destroyed, or not. If there was one single reason for this habit, there might be some excuse for those that indulge in it, but it is a thing which is utterly without any reason whatever. You have to make superhuman exertions, in the first instance, to persuade yourselves to touch tobacco. It would seem as if God, when he made that weed, said, "I invoke all spirits of nausea and nastiness to stand round about and defend it from any touch." For it seems to me that if anything would be secure from human meddling, that would. It is repugnant to every feeling. The whole nature revolts from it. You are not drawn to it by anything that is in you or in it. Not one single element of health does it give you; and the pleasure that is derived from its use is in the main, illusive pleasure. And such is the effect of it as a poison upon many constitutions, that the struggle of breaking away from it is next only to the struggle of breaking away from the cup. And it has led many and many a youth to the cup. If you have but just begun to smoke, ask yourselves what earthly good it will do you; and if you fail, as you will, to find a good excuse for continuing the habit, leave it off. If you chew and smoke, your misery is double; and if you do but one, do not try to cure yourselves by doing the other; for you will end in doing both. On grounds of simple common sense, I ask every young man in this congregation who is addicted to the unwholesome practice of smoking or chewing, Is it worth your while to spend your means, and to entail upon yourselves an unnecessary expense, for the sake of keeping up a habit that incommodes others, that annoys those about you, that will probably have a bad influence upon your health, and that will possibly injure your morals? While I would not seem to be extravagant, I cannot fail to give a solemn and affectionate warning to the young people of my charge on this subject. If you have not learned to use tobacco in any form, I beseech of you abstain from it. The young often acquire the habit because they feel that it will be a distinction. No; unfortunately, smoking is so common that it is not a distinction. If you wish to have a distinction, refrain from smoking; that will make you rather remarkable.

Passing from this general head, with its specialties, in respect to the dangers to which the young are exposed when they leave home and come to the experiences of living in a city, I mention some of the illusions that they must go through.

The first of all is that of setting up a wrong ideal and end of life: not manhood and its power; not conscience and purity; not truth and

fidelity; not industry and contentment; but simple wealth, as if that carried all things. This is the first thing that illudes and deceives men who come here. They feel that they enter the city to make their life good in the acquiring of property. So far as morality is an instrument to that end, they are impressed with the necessity of morality; but there is an undue feeling as to the importance of gaining wealth. And this is the ambition that whets and quickens the zeal of thousands and thousands.

Now, aim as broadly and highly as you please at fortune, but remember that character is better than property. It is better because it brings with it that which property does not necessarily bring—influence and happiness. For there may be such a thing as acquiring riches, and losing self-respect and respect for other men, and losing happiness therewith. There is a law of happiness, just as there is a law of health. Happiness does not come by chance. It is a thing that God has ordained, and that he guards; and no man shall be made happy simply by the possession of wealth. A man being wealthy, and knowing how to use his wealth, may augment his happiness by it. It may open stores for the eye, for the ear, for the taste, and for the moral sentiments; and so a man by his wealth may make himself refined and cultured, and may make others happy, and thus make himself happy. But the law of happiness is to give, and not to receive. The world has been seeking for modes of obtaining happiness for ages, and it is reluctant to believe that it is a law which never can be broken, that men are happy in the proportion in which they make others happy, and not in the proportion in which they strive after their own happiness.

Next is the illusion in respect to the relation which exists between means and ends. There is a grand attempt of men to gain by dexterity, and without equivalents of work, or skill, or strength, their prosperities in life. There is a great tendency to unthoroughness. There is a want of fidelity. There is a lack of the appreciation of these things. Not merely on moral grounds, but even on business grounds, there is an inconsideration of truth, and honesty, and integrity. There is an impression that a man may be unthorough and unfaithful, and yet by sharpness and dexterity gain a livelihood, and acquire property. And so, in all trades, and artizan employments, and professions, there is a temptation of the young to the illusion of appearances instead of the reality of things; to the illusion of quickness, and sharpness, and dexterity, instead of fidelity, and honesty, and thoroughness. And this is a course that grows worse and worse with years, and must in the end of life leave a man hopeless in old age. Men charge the fault of their ill-success in life to society, and to the envy and jealousy of rivals; whereas their failure is attributable to the fact that they have stumbled on the illusion that they could gain a prosperity, not by rendering an equivalent work, not by exercising skill, not by putting

forth thought, not by adhering to moral fidelities, but by practising dexterities.

There is but one other illusion that I shall mention, and that is the illusion that the young are too apt to fall into, of the incompatibility of a moral and religious course in life with worldly prosperity; as if the God that made and arranged the laws of political economy was not the same God that made and arranged the laws of morality and religion. There is a strong impression that the foundations of business have been so laid, and its laws have been so established, that a man's conscience is apt to be in his way, and that a man's scruples are apt to be at the expense of his prosperity; and there are thousands that mean to be good, and mean to be religious, after they shall have secured their foothold and standing in life, who defer it and feel that for the present it would be incompatible with their outward success. But, admitting one thing—that it requires more time to prosper by a method that is strictly in obedience to moral principle—nothing is more certain than that the higher you are on the scale of fidelity to moral principle, other things being equal, the more you will be sought, and the greater will be your chances of success. An invincible habit of truthfulness, of unbribable honesty; a fear of God that holds a man, seen or unseen, in restraint; a conscience that is scrupulous even to a punctilio—these are things that, when they are found out, make a man just such an one as every bank, every insurance company, every broker, every merchant wants. No person is so much in demand as he who has common sense, industry, and that moral fidelity which comes from religion.

Such are some of the dangers which beset the young that are filling our cities. What are some of the remedies that may be applied? There is not one royal remedy. From every side in human society we must address remedies to these conditions of temptation.

There ought, first, to be inculcated a higher sense of the responsibility of those who employ the young, to watch for them and care for them. I am aware of the difficulties which are involved in this. I would not undertake to say to every employer, "You must take to your house, and have under your personal inspection, the conduct of every young man in your service." That would be pressing the matter unduly. Still, I may be permitted to say that we are not enough responsible for the welfare of those that are in our immediate employment. I think that one of the most interesting sights that I beheld in the city of London was Shoolbred's great store. I was informed that four or five hundred men were engaged in the manufacturing and sales department. I was taken kindly through every part of that establishment. There I found that the young men had their rooms under the roof where they did their work. I visited them. They were clean, and airy, and pleasant. They had a little locker with books, and other

conveniences that made them seem attractive. All the young men had their meals in a dining-room under the same roof. I visited that. It was appetizing to go in there. I went through their kitchen and laundry—for their clothes are all washed in the building. I saw the kind-hearted matron that plays the mother to these hundreds of young men. If they are sick, she nurses them and if they need counsel, she is at hand to give it them. She watches over them. I went into the lecture-room. In it was a library. I glanced at the books, which had been wisely selected. I saw the seats and chairs in that room. There they are accustomed to invite gentlemen of science, gentlemen of learning, travelers, and historians, who are glad to give information to the young men. I went into their drill-room—for they have military instruction. Fire-arms, and whatever other equipments are needed for the purpose, are furnished by the establishment. Such was the provision that had been made by their employers for these young men. And do you suppose that they were worse young men because so much pains was taken to enhance their comfort and elevate their condition? Do you suppose they had less *esprit de corps*? Do you suppose they were less valuable as clerks? Do you suppose that they studied the interest of their employers less?

Now I do not undertake to say that every man shall go and imitate these gentlemen; but I do say that every reflecting man ought to find in such an example some suggestions which should lead him to look about and see if there are not many things that he can do in the care of the young that are under him.

Then there should be a public sentiment formed—and churches should assist in forming it—by which the young should more and more be released from the exactions of business, and should have time secured for their improvement. On that account I always regarded with great interest the Early Closing movements. Not that they had no difficulties and incidental evils; but I have always felt that a Christian community should at least bear witness of their interest in the young by abstaining from shopping late at night. Take the day for your work, and relieve stores of the motive to keep open through the long evenings, so that the young may have their time. In the minor rounds of business, industry is so exacting that the young say they have no time to read, and that even if they get a few hours, they are so overwearied with exertion that it is in vain for them to attempt anything of the kind. Now a public sentiment, originating in the churches and pervading the community, will go far to relieve the young, and give them a part of the evenings of the week for mental culture. Churches, and all who have the young in their families, should be aroused to a sense of their responsibility in this regard. We take care of our own children; but it is a part of our duty to take care of other people's children. We are to watch for them. We are the disciples of him who came to seek and to save the lost. He came to *seek*

them; and it is a part of the duty of every Christian church to make search for the young that are in it, that are round about it, or that are within its reach. Particularly, the young should themselves endeavour to take charge of their fellows. They are in an especial manner set apart for this work, because the young have access to the young; because they are in sympathy with them; because they have their confidence; because they have a knowledge of their wants and of their trials. They are marked out as the natural almoners of bounty to them; as their natural aids and helpers.

It is in this view that there is a sphere of great usefulness in such an association as this Young Men's Christian Association, and that it should have the favour and sympathy of Christians in such a city as this. They do not undertake to do the work of churches. They do not undertake to do that which can be better done by organizations which already exist. They undertake to look after those that are of their own age, and that are in their circumstances, that they may carry out in detail that work which churches would do, but which they are unable to do. It is in the power of Christian young men to make provision for the social wants of their fellows to a great extent. It is in their power to give them, if not a home, an equivalent for one. It is in their power to give them what every young man should have—company. It is in their power to give them company that shall profit, and not mislead them. It is in their power to give them a social and intellectual development. It is in their power to give them amusement that shall not deteriorate. It is in their power, also, while giving them a home, company, social and intellectual development, and amusement, to give them religious culture. It is in their power to give them three things: conscience toward God, benevolence and sympathy for men, and the root of these, and the perpetual fountain of them—true piety.

To the young men of this Christian Association let me say, While no one more than I would urge you to seek the morality of those about you; to open reading rooms; to provide papers; and to furnish opportunities for social enjoyment; after all, the centre and the mainspring of prosperity is in a heart sanctified by divine grace. True piety is that out of which comes material success. And while I would not exhort you to be less diligent in these other things, let me entreat you, through these other things, to aim at the regeneration of the heart, and its sanctification by the Holy Spirit. There never was a time when the young had such a field among the young; when the young should have such aspirations; when there opened such a future to them. We need to bring up a generation of men clear-headed, strong-hearted, quick-handed. We need to bring up a generation of men that shall love God, love their fellow-men, love their country, understand its institutions, and understand their duties as citizens. We need to bring up a generation of men that shall be head and shoulders higher than we have been. And if these mighty struggles through

which the nation is now passing shall raise the tone of manhood, and lift its standard, and give a higher idea toward which the young shall strive, we shall have cheaply paid all the treasure of money and of blood that it costs us. One degree higher, one step up, of a whole people, is an immense gain to the world.

I thank God, then, in the behalf of you into whose heart he has put it to labour and to pray for your companions. The churches will give you their sympathy, and, if you need them, their aid and personal exertion. Go on without discouragement. Though other objects for the time being may seem to attract and dazzle the mind, patient continuance in well-doing will establish the end which you seek to establish. Be not weary in well-doing. In due season you shall reap, if you faint not. The young are with you. They are still being tempted. The snare is spread for their feet. The cup is poisoned and reached out for their hand. The eye that glares death upon them is fixed upon them in secret. Watch for them. Labour for them. Do not despair in your work. Give it not over hastily. Through evil report and through good report, through every discouragement, cleave to it. And by-and-by God shall say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my children, ye have done it unto me."

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).

THE ONLY BONDAGE in God's Creation that is tolerable and desirable is the bondage of love. No man knows true happiness till he has learned how to love—how to love, not a little, but a great deal; how to love, not occasionally, as a sweetmeat at a banquet, but how so to love that he is tied up by it; he is in bondage to it, it rules him. For the only slave on God's earth that needs no compassion and pity is the slave of love.

Reprinted from Henry Ward Beecher, *The Essence of Religion* (London: James Clarke & Co., n.d.), pp. 65-80.

And yet liberty is as little understood in the general way as almost any one single name or quality. Government, restriction, are the thoughts of rulers; men are not to be trusted; men are beaten about by so many passions that if a man is to be left perfectly free, he is a dangerous animal; we must, therefore, have governments for men. Yet in this very chapter, and further down, as we shall see by-and-by, there is a strain of music: "Against such," as he described, and as I shall, "against such there is no law." Is there a liberty, therefore, where there is no law? Yes, and there is no liberty anywhere else. Is it, then, the Gospel doctrine that laws and governments, officers, courts, restrictions, are all to be abolished? Yes; but that will be in the millennium. If there is ever a time coming when men, living in their essential manhood, in the spiritual man, and when they are inspired with the desire of being and doing that which makes them in alliance with God, so that they would rather speak the truth for their own sake than be false, that they would rather be benevolent than selfish, and had rather be humble than proud; when men, in other words, have come into spiritual things, into the same conditions as those in which they come in spiritual things, they will need no government.

When a boy first begins his arithmetic it takes a good deal of time and trouble for him to cypher, and he says: "Six and three are—eight; no, six and three are—six, seven, eight, nine—six and three are nine." An old merchant would be ashamed to go on cyphering in such a laborious way as that; and a banker or an accountant can take four columns of figures, and run them down faster than I can run down a page of writing. Nobody has learned anything until he does it without knowing it. When anybody begins to walk after he has been long sick, he takes care of every step; but when a man is in full health, he never stops to see whether he shall step here, there, or anywhere else. The man who is fit to take care of himself does spontaneously the thing that ought to be done. No man has learned a language if he has to go to the dictionary and the grammar to know about it. No man has learned music who has to sit down at the key-board and spell out his notes. No man becomes a compositor in a printing office who has to think where the letters are. His hand thinks, and he himself is thinking of something else while he is composing his sentence out from among the type. Knowledge that has been reduced into a man's own self, so that he knows it automatically, spontaneously, that we call knowledge. Now our graces are largely occasional practices, and our daily life is, to a very large extent, automatic in selfishness and in animalism. We do not have to think when we have to get angry. The moment the offensive thing is said flash goes the anger. The moment a man cheats us the wrath comes up; we do not have to pump it; it takes care of itself. And in all our lower range of life we act spontaneously. Too often in our higher range of life we have to strive before we have the initial experiences.

Now the apostle says: "You are free, Christ came to set you free; only abuse not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh." You are not free in material and bodily conditions. Man is not free to fly; he has not any wings. Man is not free to act without eating; he has got to eat. The circle of our liberty in bodily matters is a very small circle; but in that small circle men have an amazing amount of liberty. And so the apostle says: "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, but do not mistake the currency, do not take the wrong kind; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." There is not a man or woman in this congregation who ever fulfilled that law—not one. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Moral cannibalism is very largely practised yet. "This, I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Paul makes two men out of every one; or, rather, there are two men in every one; and in that he touches very close on to the modern scientific doctrine that man was born as an animal first, and that by evolution through the Divine decree and the Divine Spirit, there was superinduced upon the animal man—man social, moral, intellectual, spiritual. If you take the seventh chapter of Romans, no man can steer through that troubled passage unless he goes upon this theory, that man, according to the apostolic idea, is a double being—the lower part is an animal, the upper part—the upper part, if there is an upper part—rides him, and is not ridden by him.

So he goes on to tell us what he means by the flesh man, what in modern parlance we mean by the animal man, the under man; and here is the description: "For the flesh"—he gives it in the broadest terms as it is exemplified in the largest abuse of our animal powers; for there is not one constituent element of animal life that is not, in its place and in due subordination, right, and it is only the excess and disproportion of it, and the usurpation by it of the higher functions of human existence, that makes animalism wrong. "For the flesh"—the animal element that is in you—"lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Now you have got the origin of sin; you have the conflict between the developed man in Jesus Christ and the original animal man. The two are perpetually warring against each other, the under man refusing to be bridled, guided by the inspiration of reason and moral sense and moral excellence—love, uttermost love; and, on the other hand, the higher elements in man constantly condemning the impulses that are tormenting him—gluttony, drunkenness, envyings, all forms of lust.

And here sit two courts, the infernal court below, and the supernal court above, and they are perpetually quarrelling with each other's decisions. This is going on through life, and every time the under one prevails over the upper one, that is sin. It is comprehensive enough;

the particulars every man can learn by his own autobiography. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And what a piteous history is that of ninety-nine men in a hundred, who, if they be conscious and faithful to their own selves, are obliged every day to say: "I knew I had an ideal, I knew what was right, I set out to do what was right, but all through the chequered day I have done the things I meant not to do, and have neglected to do the things that I intended to do."

And this conflict, this unceasing conflict between the upper and the lower man is that that led the Apostle to say: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The body, the animal man, that is constantly intruding where it has no business, sullyng the clear sky of love, dimming, clouding the day, and making us creep along the material ways of life when with wings we ought to soar by love and joy, and get into the higher and unclouded realms of experience.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." I am not under the law — of picking pockets, that is. If the law were abolished to-morrow, I would not pick anybody's pocket. I am not under the law of murder; for if there were no gallows, nor guillotine, nor officer, nor judge, nor court nor decision, nor execution, I would not murder. Why? I have that law inside myself — humanity. I do not want cruelty; I hate it. I am not under the law to drunkenness. I can go by a whole regiment of shops, and never think of turning in; I do not want it, I am above it. I do not abstain from gambling because gambling is disreputable, nor because I fear losses. I do not gamble, because I do not want to gamble. I do not avoid bad company because I should lose respectability. I do not keep bad company for the same reason that musicians do not sit down and work out discords; their ear suffers from discords, and they keep to harmony because harmony is so sweet and discord is so painful. And so in regard to spiritual things. We are led by the Divine Spirit into such a state of approbation and satisfaction in the higher things that we do not want the inferior, the antagonistic, the antithetic. "If ye are led of the Spirit ye are not under the law." Do you suppose that a bird, seeing a man in the muddy road toiling up the long ascent, when he can shoot through the air on even wing and go quicker and easier, would envy the man, or would stoop down to use his legs instead of his wings? No. A man as respects his lower nature may be said to walk; he touches the earth at every step, man in his higher nature lifts himself above the morass, above the ravine, above the mountain, and goes by the shortest course to the noblest things. "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are under the law," that is, ye do the things by the law that is in you and by your preferences and loves and likes, which otherwise are commanded. There is not in all the statute books of the whole civilised globe one single law saying to the mother, "Thou shalt love thy babe," there is not any church or creed, or any form of

legislature that says to the mother, "Thou shalt feed thy babe out of thine own body." But see the mother as the twilight darkens, sitting with her child as it draws sustenance from her own bosom, and singing sweet carols, and counting it the proudest of all the hours of the day. She has the law of the mother in her, and she does the things that ought to be done, because she loves to do them—it is automatic.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery"—there is the quality carried to its fullest extent, despising the restraints and laws of society. "Fornication, uncleanness"—for there is a depth beyond adultery and fornication—a salacious imagination, a fire of lust that goes on in a man's own secret chambers of the soul. "Lasciviousness"—as Galatia was a Greek colony, and as the Greeks were the most abominably corrupt in all social relations of any nation that ever lived, dissolved and rotten in their lasciviousness, you see with what speciality the Apostle specifies all the forms of that vice which has corrupted mankind and the world. "Idolatry"—idolatry in ancient days was not condemnable on orthodox creed principles; it was not because they made a mistake about their god; it was because idolatry made a part of their worship the indulgence of lascivious affections, and everywhere bestiality ran with idolatry. "Witchcraft"—if there is no such thing as witchcraft, the counterfeit is amazingly like it, and we have a good deal of it yet. "Hatred"—now you come to a very popular form, because there are multitudes of persons who think that hatred is sacred, that you are bound to hate the man who doesn't go to your church, bound to hate the man who is not orthodox, bound to hate the Romanist and Romanism; and if God looked out of Heaven with all the variations of impression which so-called Christian men have, he would hate about four-fifths, yes, nineteen-twentieths of all the creatures that live on the face of the earth. Of all Christian graces, I think the easiest and most productive is hatred. "Variance, emulations"—that is, disagreements and strifes one against another. "Wrath, strife"—quarrelsomeness; "seditions"—breaking out into uproar against law, order, government. "Heresies," not doctrinal disagreements; that is not the original meaning of the word heresy: heresy had always a moral element in it, according to the original intent of the word. "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, and such like."

Now these are all animal; they all spring from the basilar faculties, they all come from the base of the brain; they were original; in their primitive and organic forms they simply made the material platform on which God was to build the real man; yet they are constantly tending to subtend every form of human life. But have you ever heard an ambitious organist undertaking to show what can be done in the gymnastics of music? He goes screwing his way up through all the chromatic scale with all sorts of thunderous conjunction of sound until he has shown that the organ is devilish, or you feel so, but at last some gale of good sense overtakes him, and he begins to modulate

and gives out some sudden rare strain, such as Beethoven or Mozart hath given birth to. So out from the cacophony of harsh and ugly affections and passions the text modulates into the very melody and music of religion.

"The fruit of the Spirit." That word "fruit" is a very great favourite in the New Testament and also in the Old Testament. Christ made it almost fundamental. There is the vine, and its bearing or not bearing fruit; or, as an interpreter of Divine Providence, it is pruned that it may bring forth more fruit. The quality of fruitfulness runs through the whole New Testament, latent, or obvious and expressed. "The fruit of the Spirit," "Oh!" says the hierarch, "the fruit of the Spirit is organised churches, subordination to God's ministers, clear and definite instruction in fundamental doctrines, reverence, and awe in the presence of God, obedience of common folks to uncommon folks. That," say they, is "the fruit of the Spirit." But I do not read it here. "The fruit of the Spirit." Why, then, this world is God's garden—God's orchard. I should like to know the sort of things that God does like to raise in His garden; I should like to see the list of His orchard, the fruit for which God sustains the garden, the orchard, and the farm, for which His Providence controls events, for which the whole experience is blown as a sweet gale that blows away the winter and brings on the spring. The fruit of the Spirit, over which all God's singing birds, in hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, do chant melody—the fruit of the Spirit—the end which is sought in this world among men by the Spirit, the ripeness which is the result of the fostering care of God's Spirit—what is it? Catechism? Not a word of it. Confession of faith? Not a word of it. And yet these are not necessarily to be rejected, they are not to be disallowed. "The fruit of the Spirit." What if a man, sending his children to a dancing school, should ever after insist upon it that they should reverence the fiddle and the dancing-master and worship them? What are these but mere mechanical appliances by which to teach grace and method? And so soon as grace and method are once organised into a person, the school at which he learned them goes behind and is forgotten. No child will be an expert arithmetician that does not first dig in the mire of the common school; but afterwards he abandons that. When we read we do not stop to look at the spelling, unless we run against a false one, and then instinct brings us up. We become so habituated to it that we gather that which hovers over the letter, and is in the air, as it were, the meaning, and it is interpreted back by the heart, by the experience, by the affections. The fruit of the Spirit is that which is underlaid by culture, but culture itself is not it. The text is not the precious thing, it is the meaning in the text that is precious. A farm must have its implements, but it is the harvest that is of value, and they are relative. If a man can make a good crop with the poorest instruments he is better off than his neighbour who has ten times better instruments but a poorer crop. And if a man can make

out of heresies a better Christian life than another man does out of his orthodoxy, he is nearer to God than the orthodox man. This not disowning instruments, not at all, but it is saying substantially that men are perpetually worshippers and idolators of outside means, and quite forget that their value depends entirely on what they produce. So we have in the world, in the religious world, a vast amount of the *means* of grace without much grace. And yet when men criticise these things, when faithful pastors undertake to set forth to their congregation that while instruments or means of grace are useful there is something higher and better, "Oh, dear! dear!" they say, holding up holy hands in horror, "where is the end going to be if you take away the foundations?" The foundations are on the top in Christian character, not on the bottom! Then what are these fruits for which religion is established, for which churches and all forms of moral organisation exist, without which, as the apostle declares in keenest ridicule, all religion is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal? The noisiest instrument in the band is the emptiest one.

Now listen to the fruits of the Spirit for which a Church is established and without the production of which it is like an empty field, for which all doctrinal schedules are ordained, without which they are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, for which all orders and regulations and methods are framed, and if they do not bring forth these there is no sacredness in them, and there is no irreligiousness in trampling them under foot. It is the soul that God has filled; it is the upper man where God is the cultivator, and husbandman, and fruit-er; it is the higher man, not the under man. And here are the harvests. The fruit of the Spirit is—of course it is—is what? It is the one thing that carries in its bosom everything else; it is the mother around which are gathered the group of children; "the fruit of the Spirit is *love*." You would not think it, to see how ministers act; you would not think it, to see how converted Christians act; you would not dream it by merely reading confessions of faith, which do not discard it, but which, as far as I can remember, scarcely ever mention it. Talk about orthodoxy, sound words, wise discrimination! The mother of all things in the soul is love. I do not know what men do when they go into those great, dark cathedrals, and stoop down on pretence of praying, and sit in a kind of stupid reverence, and are shocked by any wild ebullitions of life; or a congregation made happy by the luxuriant liberty of a sanctified soul. They do not know whereunto such things will grow. "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

And the very next thing to this word means God in us; it is "*Joy*." How is that for sobriety? Stern-faced, sharp, critical man, that thinks a smile is the shadow of a coming devil, how is that? Love first, next joy. What is joy? It is the response of each of the higher faculties of a man's soul, when it is brought up to concert pitch. Every one of them tends to produce pleasure, joyfulness, alertness, liberty.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *peace*." What is peace? One would suppose it is going to sleep in church. One would suppose it to be simply the absence of pain. Peace has a positive existence. When the soul in every part of itself is stayed upon some good centre, upon God and Christ in the love of God—when every part of the soul ceases to be hungry, when it has no clamour, no sorrow, but is restful, glad, and perfectly composed, in a sweet harmony in itself, that is peace.

"*Long-suffering*." (I am going over this catalogue again; I have other applications of it, so I will not develop all that I think about it.) Long-suffering: we admire that quality a great deal more than we practise it. We admire long-suffering in other folks. We admire long-suffering in the schoolmaster, in the regent mother, in the creditor to whom we owe a debt. It inspires almost the dignity of perfect beauty. A man that will let you abuse him, a man that will let you cheat him even, a man that forgets to-day what you said or did yesterday—his long-suffering, oh, how beautiful it is! It is a patience that is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil. Yet look at that matron who through the years of early life inherited bereavements and sorrow, the thinning out of the precious flock, the dishonoured name of the husband, the death, the rolling upon her of the responsibility of rearing the whole flock, the unwearied fidelity, the inexhaustible patience, furrow after furrow that experience is ploughing upon her brow; at last the children had come to ripeness, and they in their turn are lifting her out of trouble, and she sits serene at the close of life more beautiful than the going down of the sun. Is there any object in life that a man can look upon that is more beautiful than long-suffering?

"*Gentleness*." Now, gentleness is not a quality of not having *vim*. When a man is strong and energetic, and at the same time uses his strength and energy and power with sweetness, that is gentleness. See the great swarthy smith as he returns from the anvil, every muscle herculean, after the day's labour washing himself that he may come back to his own complexion. As the little child totters out to him, see with what ineffable sweetness he gathers up the little one on his shoulder, and holds the babe in his arm. He that could swing a giant and slay him walks about the servant of the little children, so gently that they love him almost more than they love the mother's bosom. It is the sweetness of strength in an element of love that makes gentleness. It is not an attribute of weakness; weakness is not gentle.

"*Goodness*." That is a very comprehensive word that everybody uses and nobody defines. It is a sort of mixture of everything. It is where all the qualities are brought together and shine out. It is where all the qualities are brought together and shine out. It is a composite grace.

"*Faith*." What is that? Believing things you do not understand? No. It is sanctified imagination; it is having the horizon above the world; it is believing that there are things that have no mortal forms;

it is believing in a future, believing in a whole assembly of intelligence above your head; it is having a life hereafter, a greater life than this. Ah! the man who sits in his house all day knows exactly what he knows—that is the fireplace, that is the rug, that is the fender, that is the window, that is the door. That is what is called a practical person, who knows what he does know. But out of doors the whole heaven is above his head, night and day, filled with inestimable treasures.

“Meekness.” That is a form of love. If a man smite you in the face your bodily nature says: “Smite him back again.” If a man betrays you in the bitterest way, nature, in the bad sense of that term, says: “Give him as good as he sent.” What is meekness? It is receiving personal injury, yet having such a predominant spirit of love in you that you wish the man that does it good. It is not retaliation, it is being so filled with love and nature of Jesus Christ that you give back blessing for railing and cursing, prayers for those that spitefully use you. That is the definition. Do you know what meekness is? Any man that knows what perfect meekness is is at liberty to rise up without any danger of disturbing this congregation.

“Temperance” is the next; self-control, self-government, which in the ordinary range of life is indispensable to education, and indispensable to conduct—the power of controlling ourselves and keeping the body under.

Now, with regard to this chapter, bear in mind, if you please, that this is the inspired definition and declaration of the Christian religion as made manifest by Christ’s chief servant, the Apostle Paul. And I remark, in the first place, that there are a great many men who have religion who have no Christianity. What is religion? It is reverence, it is worship. Its remote origin was fear. It was a sense of a man’s danger in the presence of the unknown Deity. It was an attempt, therefore, to palliate Him, to keep down His justice and wrath, and placate Him in some way. The original idea of bowing down before the king and the powers that be, and bowing down before God as if He were the dreadful potentate of the universe—that was the idea of reverence, and there are multitudes of teachers who inspire the idea into the young and old that reverence is the proper manifestation of religion. I say it is as far from it as it can possibly be. Every child is called on to say in his earliest lisplings: “Our Father.” See the child that has a severe, harsh, unjust parent, how he steals in and looks to see if he is good-natured or not; how he comes round the chair and never trespasses; and by-and-by he touches him. What kind of a father is that that a child slavishly intrudes upon, not knowing whether he is going to give him a blow or a smile? Any child that would come to me in that way is no child of mine. “Let us come boldly,” says the Apostle, “to the throne of grace, because God knows everything about us.” Naked and open are we before Him with whom we have to do. Fatherhood is universal invitation. The idea of God sitting in the heavens with a severe, stern law

that He thinks more of than He does of the people under it, as the pulpit often teaches us, that God must take care of His law! Christ says that God sends His rain on the good and the bad, and makes His sun shine on the just and the unjust, like the great heart of love brooding, not as the sun that rises and sets, but with an effulgence that has no night and no midnight. God says: "Come to Me, children; come, I am your Father"; and am I to come sneaking up unawares, to see if He is good-natured or not? I come to Him with the rush and joy of childhood, not because I think I am worthy. A child does not think anything about whether he is worthy or unworthy; a child is sped by love and received by love. Love, not reverence, is religion.

"Joy." We seem to suppose that joy is very proper in the shop at proper times, in the house at suitable times, but that exhibitions of joy in the church are so irreverent that if a man smiles he does it behind his handkerchief, and those are the tricks that we try to play off with God; as if children at home with Him whom we are taught to call "Father" should play all the tricks of the slave of the Oriental despot. God loves cheerfulness and mirthfulness, or He would not have sunk the fountains of them so deep in the best parts of the human soul. Do you suppose that when He sees the rejoicing child coming near to Him in mirth, re-echoing the very Psalms, do you suppose that He reproves him, or that his offering is received with abatement? Now, religion is more than believing right. We believe right for the sake of developing religion—Christian religion. If we believe right, and have no religion, we are like that vine which the prophet denounced: "Wherefore, when I came, brought it forth wild grapes?" or the figtree that had no figs. Thousands and thousands of men have substituted their creed for their religion. They have a petrified creed; they do not believe that anybody one inch outside of that creed has any considerable chance in future. They have read in vain all the way through, with and without spectacles, that love is the fulfilment of the law, and that he who loves knows God, for God is Love, and that he who knows not love knows not God. They have read that, and have heard it said again and again it is the end of the law for righteousness—that is, for manhood; it is the beginning, the middle, the end, the chief factor, the great producer; yet there are many men to-day in chairs and pulpits, up and down throughout the land, that are looking at men askance whose lives are as sweet as flowers, and whose juice is sweet as apples and peaches, and say that they will be damned, that they are forsaking the truth.

Now, it is not for me to say that systems of theology are to be ignored; but while we use them we are to use them as implements and instruments, not as final ends. It is a great deal better that men should learn to read by going to school—that is, schools are conveniences that most easily teach men to read and the elements of education; but there was many a slave who lay on his belly and learned his letters by the fire or the light of the pine torch, and when he learned his letters

he could read. Imagine a man saying to him: "Have you been at school?" "No, sir!" "Then you cannot read." All creeds that tend to develop the understanding and moral sense and the higher affections are to be employed for that sake, and not for their own sake. The fundamental doctrines, the executive doctrines are only fundamental for you and for me as private Christians. If I am to teach I must take the knowledge and experience of men in days gone by, and use those forms of doctrine which have been found under the providence of God to convict men of sin, and bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ through faith, and build them up in a holy Christian life. There are multitudes of things that are most useful; but even if you should change your creed to-day in the growing light of an advancing civilisation you do not touch your religion, any more than a man who changes an old plough for a new and better one changes agriculture. It is an instrument, and all doctrinal creeds are mere instruments; but the things that they are to produce are *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, self-government*.

There are, therefore, I think, a great many religious people and some Christians. There is an impression spread abroad among the young very widely, that religion is a thing to be put off as long as they can; or that religion, if it has joys, has special joys that belong to religion. If a man wants a full outplay of his own nature, he must bring his constitutional faculties up into the realm and atmosphere of the religious spirit; then there will be sources of joy. There is a vague impression in the world that men's joy springs out of this: "I am going to be saved; when I die I am going to heaven." Then they make up a sort of allegory or imagination as to what kind of time it will be, and it reflects itself back to them. But the teaching of the Word of God is this — that the true development of our minds and faculties according to the Lord Jesus Christ gives them harmony and melody in themselves, and joy springs out of everything, out of sorrow itself, out of sin, as old Martin Luther, in his audacious and grand way, says: "Blessed be God for my sins," and the consciousness of their degradation; and over against it the wondrous atoning love of Jesus Christ made him feel: "If it had not been for my sins I should never have had such a view as that"; just as a man may say: "Blessed be the storm," when he sees the rainbow spanning the heavens.

A true life in Jesus Christ is a life of liberty, of largeness, of joyfulness and peacefulness, and if a man wants to get the most out of the life that he is living in this world it is better that he should reap the crop out of the top of his head and not out of the bottom of it.

His passions give him a certain sort of joy — lurid, but they wear out and shade down, his self-contentment growing less and less as the years increase; but the joys that spring from the top of the mind, the spiritual man, are least in the beginning; increment comes day by day, and they blossom when all the world is under frost, like the asters and

chrysanthemums of our garden grow full blossomed into the world. When heart and flesh fail, then in the man that is living in the true spirit of Jesus Christ, and under the enchantment of love; then, when property is lost or passes out of his hand, when no man chanting never so sweetly can fill his ear with music, when weeping friends are no longer able to help him or he to receive their consolation—then, when the tabernacle is being taken down, joyfulness springs up, and is never so great as when a man passes from glory to glory.

Another thing I wish to say is that we have got to have a new light on the subject of preaching the Gospel of Christ. Men are ordained to preach the text, to preach the intellectual elements of the Gospel, but no man ever preaches effectually to the hearts of men any more Gospel than he has in his own heart. Ideas are not Gospel; dispositions are Gospel; and he who brings to men thoughts of liberty in all things right and noble and good, and cheerfulness, and loveliness, and forgiveness, and patience, and long-suffering, and gentleness in the warfare of this life—he that lives Christ knows Christ, and can preach Christ. Nobody else can. You may bring me a catalogue of fruits; all the fruits of earth do not taste good out of a catalogue. Bring me one cluster from the orchard, that touches at once my palate and my imagination. Gospel living is the only ordination that can make a man God's priest and God's minister.

Then I say more than this. I say that the fruits of the spirit will kill that red dragon of Infidelity dead. Men do not believe in a Church, many of them, and men do not believe in the Bible as it lies to their understanding, and they do not believe in what they call the fantastic experiences of men who do not know themselves. Men say: "As for that which belonged to the old Church lore, we have demonstrated that it is not true, and we have no occasion for Church and no occasion for ministry—we are Agnostics in so far as most of theology is concerned; and as to Christians, when we see some Christianity amongst men we shall be better able to judge what it is worth." Now, I say that while a man may doubt the inspiration of Scripture, and the origin of the race, and the nature of sin and of responsibility, and the tenets in regard to the Trinity, and the special philosophical theories, of which there have been eighteen or nineteen different ones, as to the atonement of Jesus Christ—while men may say in regard to all these: "It is all foreign to me"; bring me, if you please, the man who really sees love, and who will say: "I do not believe in it." Everybody believes in it—the child, the mother, the wife, the husband, the father, the neighbour, the sweetheart—everybody believes in love.

And everybody believes in joy. Whoever heard sweet-toned bells in a chime that did not stop to listen? Why, at Antwerp I sat for hours under the spire of that vast cathedral to hear those chimes that rang out every quarter of an hour. It seemed as if the heavens rained music down upon me. Whoever saw real, simple, unalloyed, happy childhood

that did not stop to look at it? Whoever saw a school let out that did not wait to see it? Whoever saw a bevy of sweet girls going to and fro with laughter on the street who did not wish he was an artist? Whoever saw happiness in the family when on Thanksgiving-day or Christmas-day the whole circle of them entwined in each other and around each other, and merry hours went past even to the small hours of the night— whoever saw that and said: “I am an infidel; I do not believe in joy”? Whoever saw a great heart on whom time had spent itself, and the waves dashed against him, and the commotion of the people raged round about him, who lifted his head in calmness and patience and all peacefulness, sure of God and sure of the future— whoever saw such heroism and did not admire it? Whoever saw long-suffering anywhere and did not call it heroic? Whoever saw a wife—of all tragedies bloodless, but the most horrible—marrying in the freshness of her early life an ideal husband, only to find out little by little that she was worshipping an idol—gambling, drunken, licentious, removed further and further from her in moral character—yet she must needs cling to him, and of all lying outside of hell I know of nothing so loathsome as for one to lie side by side with a brutal beast, whose every sense gives evidence of rottenness; yet how many holy women there have been who have borne it in the morning, at noon, at night, in youth, in middle life, and further on, and when at last the wretch dies, and everybody thanks God that he is gone, there is one that sheds tears over his dishonoured grave, and remembers only the things that she had thought of him—when one looks upon such heroism as that, who can say that he does not believe in long-suffering?

Infidelity is external—not the book, not the Church, not the officer, not the misinformed superstitious; but there is no infidelity in the heart when you have reproduced the fruits of the Spirit before men; and if there is ever to be a millennial day—and I believe there will be—it will not come until the sporadic cases of Christ’s likeness are swallowed up in the multitude of them. If all those who sit here to-day were like the apostles of the Pentecost; if everything that is animal and fleshly were subjected and reduced to its lowest terms; if everything that was in you was rational and inspirational; if everything in you was sweet and joyous, full of peace, goodwill, and self-sacrifice for others; if all were thinking of others better than themselves—if this congregation were animated one single year with such experience as that, London would feel it like a change of climate. Here and there we have single Christians—the head in the household—single Christians in obscurity and poverty, but we have never had communities, we have never had even whole churches, that had this true spirit of Christ, creating an atmosphere as well as an experience. When that day comes, oh, how fast the Gospel will gain its victories! When that day comes, when all sects shall be, not made into one sect, not necessarily, but when they shall all be wrought this high and royal spirit of love

and mutual honour and respect, then look out; the morning star has arisen and the Sun of Righteousness is not far. But if we think that with all our missionaries and all our church offerings we may cherish the spirit of the animal man, with its envyings, its jealousies, and separations, and still expect the millennial day, we shall be expecting, as the Jews did, that when their Messiah came He would come in arms and overthrow the empire, and lift them to a physical and national triumph. The kingdom of God is within us, and when the kingdom of God is displayed all men can but admire.

Dearly beloved, it is for you and for me, for each of us in his own sphere and in the calling of God, to make mention to men and give a demonstration of the reality of religion. They do not believe it, selfish men, on your account; they do not believe it, proud men, on your account; self-indulgent men, you stand in the way of Christ. All you that are limp in your higher experiences and only strong in the lower, you stand in the way. Prepare the way; take the stumbling-block out of the way, and then, when the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head, you shall swell the chorus, and you shall keep step with God's Anointed One.

CHRISTIAN LIFE A GROWTH

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:14-16).

A STRONG RELIGIOUS TENDENCY, without definite aim, without sufficient positive knowledge, without practical duties, is found in our day,

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as it has been in every age. Moral endowments are as natural as artistic talents, or intellectual gifts; and many men, with strong moral endowments, feel the want of religion, and yet wander after its blessings, without profit and without comfort. As an artist, in the age of a school like the Byzantine, hungers for, and strives after, a higher experience, utterly unable to feed his mind, or direct it aright, so a nature that has strong moral feelings seeks up and down, here and there, going from one faith to another, from one doctrinal system to another, in the hope of finding that after which the soul craves, only to supplant an old hunger by a new one. Such natures, like those that have been long sick, sometimes come to have a morbid appetite for a new remedy; and they fly from dream to vision, from ordinance to doctrine, from dogma to mysticism, from ethics to emotion, and feed in every pasture, and fatten in none. They train in every sect, and prove every form of association, from the absolute plainness of Quaker simplicity to the gorgeous superfluity of the Roman worship; and, after all, they are restless, hungry, dissatisfied.

Now, the apostle dehorts such from unsatisfying fickleness, and exhorts them to a stable life. And, surely, there never was a time in the history of the world when this exhortation had more scope and pertinency than now. For the whole community is filled with men who have strong religious desires, but who are yet unsettled, wandering, and fickle.

I. The Christian life, as the apostle presents it to such natures, is a process of development of conduct and character. Christian life is not a rounded experience. It is not a mere sudden and completed transaction. It is not a thing which, once having possessed himself of it, a man wears, as, once having bought a diamond, he wears that. Christian life is a condition of growth and development. And personal training is the whole end and aim of doctrine, and association, and influence, in this life.

II. Jesus Christ is the supreme model and centre to which every effort for training and development is directed.

III. Love is the transcendent and master influence by which this practical aim is to be nourished, guided, and completed. This is the apostolic remedy for religious uncertainty, for moral fickleness, for that large class of cases in the community of men of moral ideas, with strong hunger, but without definite opinions; with more doubts than convictions; with a keen, critical ability, but without assimilating power, or power to reduce the vague and imaginative to the definite and practical.

Let me, then, repeat this masterly prescription, which is the cure for this kind of moral ailment. First, it is personal growth in manly practical piety; second, it is the development of character upon the pattern—Christ Jesus; and, thirdly, it is a development and growth by the ministration and potency of love, or the highest emotive element.

In the actual unfolding of Christian life all these elements are united; they are consentaneous. But, just as although, in the process of nutrition in the human body the work of the stomach, of the heart, of the liver, of the secretory and excretory organs, is, comprehensively considered, one work; yet, when we come to teach concerning these various parts of the physical constitution, it is necessary that they should all be considered separately and in series; so, although in the actual facts of life the things which I have put in three classes go on together, yet, in teaching of them, I must analyze and treat them one by one.

I propose, this morning, to treat only the first point, namely, that *Christian life is a universal, practical growth.*

The Scripture, I know, sometimes represents it differently. It represents Christian life as a deliverance; and, therefore, it represents the Christian as one that has been long in prison, or slavery, and is being delivered, set free. The idea would seem to be that a man who is delivered by the Holy Ghost from sin is a complete Christian. It is represented, sometimes, as a translation from darkness to light. It is represented, sometimes, as a re-creation by the power of God, the old being changed and the new taking the place of it. These are all critical elements, and they sometimes are the very criteria and pivotal points of Christian experience. But when the whole work is described in the New Testament, as in our text, then it is described as a gradually unfolding state, a progressive upbuilding, a practical education, with all the moods and tenses, with all the needs, and with all the characteristic processes that belong to any education.

A perfect education, for instance, of the body, means the education of every one of its organs, and each of its parts, not only individually, but co-operatively. The eye is educated, the ear is educated, the tongue is educated, the hands are educated, every muscle in the body is educated—each part is educated separately; and then, cooperatively, they are educated and developed to trades, to arts, to various functions. And so, Christian education means the developing, the strengthening, the skilful using of every part of our mental constitution, according to the laws of Christ's kingdom. If we are becoming Christians, or are to become Christians, the imagination, the moral sentiments, the affections, the passions, the appetites, every part that goes to constitute the human soul, is to receive the divine stimulus. Then, fashioning itself on the pattern of Christ Jesus, every part is to be unfolded, augmented. And then the various parts are to be taught cooperative life, which is a great scheme of inward development and education. And though this education begins, sometimes, by luminous experiences, though it has great points where it seems as though the whole destiny of a man's life is determined by the event of an hour, or a day; yet, these are critical facts, and they are the specifics of which the other is the generic—namely, that the true education of a man is the education of

every part of the human soul, and that that education is to be upon the pattern of Christ Jesus. This brings the thought to the ordinary intelligence of men, and conforms it to reason.

Many suppose that, when one becomes a Christian, by some mysterious power the soul is sent ballooning upward, and that when it comes down it is different from what it was. What reason there is for a change they do not know; but they have a vague impression that a man comes to be a Christian by having certain penetrating feelings, certain joys, certain experiences to which he has not been accustomed. The fact that a man knows how to sing, and did not; that he knows how to rejoice, and did not; that he knows how to pray, and did not, is taken as evidence that he is a Christian.

It is true that men are sometimes even caught up to the seventh heaven, and that they suddenly learn how to sing, and rejoice, and pray; but, after all, these are but specific steps in something that is greater than either of them taken separately—namely, Christian education, according to the rational, intelligent, well-apprehended New Testament description. It is the deliberate education of all the parts of the soul, in their own nature, acting cooperatively, with the purpose of building a perfect man in Christ Jesus. No matter whether Christian life begins with great impetus, or not; no matter whether there are stinging or exhilarating sensations at the threshold; no matter whether the man seems to himself like one saved out of the midnight of horror, or the abyss of distress, or like one awaking in the morning, scarcely to know when the sun brought the twilight in; no matter what is the special experience; it may be one or another of these, or it may comprehend them all; but the characteristic thing in being a Christian is the education of every part of the soul upon the model of Christ Jesus. It is accompanied with high feeling in some, and with low feeling in others; with more of practice in some, and with more of reflection in others; with more of moral feeling in some, and with more of social feeling in others; but whether it comes with more that is secular or more that is spiritual, with more that is ideal or more that is factual and common sense, with more that is philosophical or more that is ethical, it matters not; for all these elements are under the influence of the Holy Ghost: the schoolmaster that is bringing every man, according to the range and nature of his own being, into the condition of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

The education of any one of the faculties of the human mind has a vast range. Take a man's reason. Consider how much is regarded as needful to its development. To prepare the boy for college it is thought to be necessary that he should study three, or four, or five years, at the academy. Four years' additional training are given him in college. And at every stage of his progress, during all these years, it is said to him, "You are merely disciplining your understanding; you are simply learning how to use your reason." And then he is kept two or three

years in a law school, a theological school, or a medical school, in order that he may acquire the power of using the instruments of his particular profession. It requires from six to ten years to discipline the reason.

Now, it is easier to discipline the reason than to discipline the moral feelings; and if it requires so much to discipline the reason, how much more must it require to discipline the moral feelings! If religion is putting every part of the soul to school; if the higher, the intermediate, and the lower parts of a man are to be schooled and perfected upon the model of Christ Jesus, what a field of labour there is, and how much work there is to be done!

If there are any who think that Christians are made as eagles are, let them correct their notions. The egg is laid, the mother-bird broods it, and, when it is hatched, it is an eagle. Though it is only an eaglet, it needs not education, but simply growth; and it is as much an eagle the day it is hatched, as when it first swoops for its prey, or five years afterwards. It is no more an eagle when it is ten years old than when it is five years old, or one year old. It is born into eagleship. But no man is born into Christian life. That is a thing into which a man ultimately comes by laborious and immensely detailed education.

You shall hear men say that they were born into the kingdom of Christ in a revival of religion. They were born into the kingdom of Christ just as Columbus was born into America! He saw the shore; but look at the maps that he and those who were with him made when they thought they had discovered America. It would make you laugh to see them. What did they know of the coast-line, of the rivers, or of the mountains of this vast continent? All these had to be explored. Men think they are born into the kingdom of Christ; and when they experience religious joy and comfort they think they are saved. Saved? I hope they are *going* to be saved; but if they *are*, it will be through much tribulation.

What would you think of a child that should go into ecstasies the moment he stepped into a school-house, and his name was entered on the master's list, and say, "Thank God, I have got my education"? Got his education simply because he has seen the inside of a building where education is imparted? It will not be long before the arithmetic, and the grammar, and the master's ferule on the back of both of them, will teach him another lesson!

Persons have great distress, that distress is followed by great joy; and then they say, "I am a Christian." They are told, "You must not think that you will always be happy; you will have your doubts and fears"; and that is about all the idea they have on the subject—that they are Christians, and that they will have doubts and fears.

Now, God has made you schoolmasters over the hardest of schools to manage—namely, yourselves. Your reason; your social nature; the faculty of love in you; your appetites and passions—all these are to be

educated, and you are to put them to school to the Lord Jesus Christ, and make them learn, and harmonize them into co-operative knowledge and life. And when a man has been born again really, he has been born like a babe in the cradle, so that he has all his years before him to fill up with appropriate developments of manhood.

I do not say this to undervalue the first experiences of religion, but to teach you that they are only the rising light, after which comes a long day of toil. God has created men, and the world in which they live, in such relations that all this work of educating the whole mind upon the pattern of Christ Jesus can be done, not by any use of what are called "means of grace," but by volition, and by the performance of all those duties which human life imposes upon you while you are in this world. This work of development and education is to be the result of social conduct, of business energy, and of the institutions of the family, the school, and the church. In short, human life and human society are just as much divine institutions for the development of piety as the church itself. God has a moral educating purpose in the ordinary flow of daily life, by which, as a general thing, men can grow into the pattern of Christ Jesus.

This purpose takes in Christian education. Nor would I have you suppose that I undervalue special influences, or what may be technically called *church* and *religious* influences. All these are such indispensable instruments that, if it were not for them, I do not see how the other things would avail. But, with these as rudders, or as head-lights, or as inspirations, God also employs care, and work, and trouble, and joy, and daily duty, and secular things. All the elements that touch a man work together for his good. In other words, God has means of grace besides those that are *in chief*, if I may so say. The Bible, ministers, churches, and Christian influences—these are the general officers; but God has prophets at work for us in this holy warfare, in every thought, in every duty, in every care, in every rising up, in every sitting down, of human life. They are commissioned to take care of God's people, and educate them into men in Christ Jesus—and not merely in things that are agreeable, but also in things that are disagreeable; not merely in things that are easy, but also in things that are hard.

Men often judge of God's providence, in its relation to their Christian life, by the nature of their experience, as regards its pleasantness or unpleasantness. If they are settled just as they want to be, and they have just about as much as they need, they feel that there is a benignant Providence that is overruling events for their good. But under such circumstances a man grows selfish, and bulges out; and God sees that he is a vessel in the sanctuary with a great dent in it; and he takes that kettle to the brazier, who with hammer commences the work of beating in that dent; and out cries the suffering metal, "Lord, why is this? I thought you were in favour of me, and were going to do me good, but, behold, you are subjecting me to the most excruciating torture!"

Your prosperity bulges you out; and then adversity is God's correcting hammer by which you are set right. God is going to do you good; but he will do it by restraining you when you are going wrong, as well as by encouraging you when you are going right. God works in antagonisms all the time.

Such a breadth is there to this work that it comprehends the education of the thought, of the moral sentiments, of the affections, of every part of a man's nature; and if it is a work that is being carried on in part by moral and spiritual influences, and just as much by secular and providential influences, that are inherent in the nature of society, and that are organic in the structure and relations of this world, then how vast a work is it! No man can complete it in a day, or in a year. It is a work which extends the whole earthly life; and when that life has passed away, the work will not be done.

I plant many seeds in my garden from which I do not look for blossoms the year that I plant them. Yet I nourish them and transplant them; and when the days of November commence to cut them down, I take them up, roots and all, and hide them in a dark frost-proof dwelling for the winter. There they rest till the spring comes, when I go and take those buried roots and stems, and bring them forth out of their grave, and put them into a better soil. And before September comes round in the second year of their growth they will do what they had not time to do in the first. It takes two summers to get a blossom on many plants. It takes I know not how long a series of summers to develop the highest blossom and the truest fruit that we can bear. God takes us from this life, and hides us in the grave; and then, in his good time, transplants us in another soil. The work is not done in this life. It is not done when you are converted, or when you are happy, or even when you have gone on in the Christian course for forty years. Such is the pattern of that work which God is carrying forward, such is the majesty of that manhood which he means shall yet flame in glory in us, that he cannot accomplish his purpose in the narrow compass of our present life; so he buries us over the winter of death, and then puts us in a better soil and a better summer, to take our next growth. And what there is beyond these "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive"; but, doubtless, there are to be serial developments, infinite, endless.

Do you say that I am destroying your notions of Christianity? It is by no means my desire to do so. I want, rather, to augment them. I do not want to make being a Christian less. I want to give you an idea of Christian character and life that is broader, richer in detail, vaster in scope, more beautiful in realization, and more abundant in fruit. It is a great deal more to be a Christian than you have been accustomed to think. There is a reality in it. There is such a thing as being harmonized upon Christ, in the understanding, in the moral sentiments, in the affections, in the will, and in the practical life; and this is a real work, worthy of angelic ambition. It is a work that may well occupy man, with all

his time, with all his power, with all his conscious and unconscious influences, during his whole life. It cannot be given too early, and it cannot roll on too late.

This comprehensive work of soul-building, or soul-growth, goes on under two great comprehensive laws—that of continuity, and that of periodicity. There is no great principle in nature which relates to human life, coming towards which you shall not find another contradictory principle. I suppose the human mind, in its whole structure, is made up of opposite balancing faculties. And there is not, in the whole schedule of doctrines, one that has not a doctrine over against it. These doctrines, if they are pushed together, quarrel; but if they are kept apart, they no more quarrel than the spokes of a wheel, which, converging, find the hub at the centre, and rest in it, without interfering with each other. Take the doctrine of man's dependence upon God, and the doctrine of man's individual liberty. You can make them fight, if you want; but they are both true, and they do not need to fight. Take the doctrine of the necessity of helping men, and the doctrine that men must not be helped. They are both true, and they will not quarrel, unless they are pushed together. All through the round of investigation men are acting under opposite laws. And so Christian life is developed by a law of continuity, of steady growth, and also by a law of periodicity. Man grows continually; and no man can grow all the time, without intervals of rest. There are these contradictions at the outset. Look at it a little.

It is true that in the mind no faculty can have absolute restlessness. The mind comprehensively may be at work all the time; but I suppose it would ruin a man to take one faculty, and let it act on a single point without cessation for twelve hours. I believe it would create inflammation of the brain, and destroy the mind. Indeed, where there is a continuous action of any one faculty, which cannot be helped, and there is a perpetual dwelling upon one thought, the doctors call it by the name *monomania*; which implies the habit of doing one thing incessantly. The mind is so made that it cannot act in one direction all the time without being injured; and to compel it to act thus is to disorganize it and make it crazy. And any faculty to act healthfully must act, not continuously, but with alternate stoppings for repose, during which other faculties act in its place, or in harmony with it.

If you will take the trouble to analyze the action of your own mind, you will see how it is. First comes thought. Then there is observation. That is followed by reflection. And reflection is carried on sometimes by analogies, and sometimes by cause and effect. Thus the faculties, and combinations of faculties, that act, are constantly changing, and resting each other. So that, while there is continued action in the mind taken comprehensively, there is periodicity of action as regards each faculty.

And as it is with the faculties, so it is with the departments of the

mind. Our character is being built in the department of high religious feeling; but that is only one department of the mind; it is only one portion of that training which is necessary to make a full character. It is as important that you should be trained intellectually as that you should be trained morally, and it is as important that you should be trained socially as that you should be trained morally or intellectually, if you wish to attain to perfect manhood. I do not mean that there is not a difference in the relative value of these different departments; but I mean that, if there is to be symmetry of character, all of them are necessary. I do not say that there are not some wheels in a watch that are of more value than others; but there is not one wheel in a watch that I can take out and leave the watch good for anything. Admit that there is more power in the mainspring than in the pointers; but take the pointers off, and what good does the watch do? They are passive, they do not do anything except as they are acted upon; but they interpret the result of the operation of the machinery: thus performing an office which is indispensable to the usefulness of all the other parts. Though they are in some respects of less value than the mainspring, yet they belong to an organized whole whose efficiency depends upon keeping intact every part, no matter how small or apparently unimportant.

In Christian character, it may be, relatively speaking, that the moral functions—faith, hope, conscience, and love—stand higher on the scale than social affection, taste, and the lower forms of human reason; but if Christian character is to be complete, it must include them all.

Suppose a painter, in painting a man's face, should omit the hair and the eyebrows, saying, "A man can live without hair, and I paint only the important features," and should represent simply the mouth, the eyes, and the nose; what sort of a picture would he make? Absurd as such a thing would be in art, how much more glaring would be the absurdity, in drawing the portrait of the soul, of leaving out any part of it! Religious culture carries with it everything. All the parts are required to make the whole on this ideal—Christ Jesus.

When, then, we are educating men to be Christians, Sunday, the sanctuary, all those truths by which they are lifted up from the visible into the invisible, and by which faith, and hope, and joy are excited, are a part of the instruments to be employed in the work; for, the moment you get home from attendance upon religious worship, you say, frequently, "I am amazed that the services of the church fade so soon from my mind. I am ashamed of myself. I thought I should carry with me every holy influence which I there felt, and here I am, in an hour, with my mind absorbed by secular things. It seemed to me, when I sat before the sacred table this morning, that I never should be rid of the deep impressions that I had." Why, my friend, you ought to be rid of them. It is not the law of successful growth that any class of

feelings should be long continued. When you are in the sanctuary, you should have the feelings that the sanctuary naturally produces; and when you are at home, you should have those feelings which are naturally experienced there. One of these places is as much an appointed instrument of God for your education as the other; and it is in accordance with the law of periodicity to which I have referred that one class of feelings should subside and give place to another class, that these should subside and give place to still another class, and so on. And if you discharge your duties aright in worldly affairs, you will be better prepared, by-and-by, to resume moral thought and feeling. The mind, to be perfectly educated, must dwell sometimes on secular things, sometimes on social matters, and sometimes on moral subjects; and on these sometimes comprehensively, and sometimes in minute detail. All these elements are right, if they are rightly employed, and they are a part of that great work by which God is educating everything that is in man, and preparing him to be a man in Christ Jesus.

Suppose a man should reason in the physiology of the body, as many persons reason in spiritual physiology. Suppose a man should attempt fidelity to his physical constitution in the same way that many attempt fidelity to their souls? Suppose a man should say to himself, "Life is the duty of the body, and eating is an indispensable condition of growth"; and should eat, and, having satisfied his hunger, should say, "I have eaten for nearly an hour, and I no longer crave food, but I feel it to be my duty to go on eating, that I may build up the body. I do not see how I can eat any more; and yet, it seems to me that it would be a delinquency to cease eating"? Stop one moment. What is eating, but a process of taking in materials for the building of the body? As far, therefore, as the body can use these materials, it is right to eat; but further than that it is not right. What is thinking? It is eating. Then, as long as you can think with good results, think, but no longer. What is prayer? It is soul-eating. As long as the food of prayer does you good, pray, but when it ceases to do you good, stop praying. It is no more a sin to stop praying under such circumstances, than it is to stop eating when you cease to be hungry. But men seem to have a superstitious notion that they must keep their religious nature eating all the time.

Why, see how much the body is occupied. Do you know that one-third of your life is put to death for the sake of maintaining the other two-thirds? One-third, or one-fourth of a man's hours, according to his habits, are plunged into the death of sleep. There lies the old body, powerless; and there lies the towering mind, locked up, and under the dominion of the angel of darkness. Where now is the father beloved? Where now is the eloquent orator? Where now is the friend whose society you esteem? Go and look at him. There is nothing of him. He neither sees, nor hears, nor smiles, nor moves. He simply snores through

his six, or seven, or eight hours, as dead as the bed that he lies on. But is there a single nerve in his body that is not filling up? Is there a fibre that is not receiving its food? Is not the whole process of animal growth going on? The man has worked himself tired; and, if he is healthy, he is gaining strength as fast while he is sleeping as when he is awake. And, after he wakes up, is he not performing the duty of life when he washes, when he bathes, and when he engages in vigorous exercise, so as to come into the day fresh and strong? For a man needs to do by himself what we do by metals. There is heat in them, but it is latent; and in order to bring it out we are obliged to pound them, and subject them to much friction. There is power in man, but it is under the skin; and in order to bring it out he must expose himself to violence, and exercise a good deal. Many and many a man would be twice as much a man, if he had more physical hardships to endure. And all that expenditure of time which is given to the development of strength in a man is a part of the growth of the body. There is the time for work, and a man gives himself up to that work; but at an appropriate interval comes the time for rest, and the rest is as important as the work; and when he goes home, and gives himself up to the endearments of love, to frolicking with the children, to the ten thousand radiant joys of domestic experience, these are as much a part of his life as the work. It takes all right things through all moods and tenses, to make a man's life. The events of all the hours of the twenty-four—sleeping and waking, resting and working, laughing and crying—go to constitute the experience of the day.

And so, precisely, is it with Christian life. Some think they are Christians when their conscience is up. I hope they are; but a man may be a Christian when his conscience is down. Some think, to-day, that they are Christians because they have such joy-inspiring thoughts. To-morrow they have sorrowful thoughts, and they think that they are not Christians. But having sorrowful thoughts is no reason why a man is not a Christian. When you experience joy, God has one part of your character under training; and when you experience sorrow, he has another part of your character under training. To-day joy is working on you, and to-morrow sorrow is working on you; and sorrow is as much God's instrument of growth as joy. You do not like it as well as you do joy, but it is as essential to your development as joy. Your growth requires the employment of all instruments—not merely smooth ones and soft ones, but rough ones and hard ones. Everything that goes to stir a man up and develop every part of him, God brings into requisition in educating him. It takes all things, employed in succession, to carry on religious life; and it is as really being carried on in lower forms, in minor experiences, and in painful ones, as the processes of nature are being carried on in the midst of storms and darkness.

But there is, over and above the law of rest and activity, a law of

periodicity in Christian growth. It is not ordinarily given to men to make a steady and uniform development. Men grow as nature grows, by fits and starts.

I have around my little cabin in the country a dozen or so of rhododendrons. Broad-leaved fellows they are. I love them in blossom, and I love them out of blossom. They make me think of many Christians. They are like some that are in this church. Usually they come up in the spring and blossom the first thing, just as many persons come into Christian life. The whole growth of the plants is crowded into two or three weeks, and they develop with wonderful rapidity; but after that they will not grow another inch during the whole summer. What *do* they do? I do not know, exactly; they never told me; but I suspect that they are organizing inwardly, and rendering permanent that which they have gained. What they have added to growth in the spring they take the rest of the season to solidify, to consolidate, to perfect, by chemical evolutions; and when autumn comes, the year's increase is so tough that, when the tender plants that laughed at these, and chided them, and accused them of being lazy, are laid low by the frost, there stand my rhododendrons, holding out their green leaves, and saying to November and December, "I am here as well as you." And they are as green to-day as they were before the winter set in.

Now, I like Christians that grow fast this spring, and hold on through the summer, and next spring grow again. I like Christians that, having grown for a time, stop and organize what they have gained, and then start again. I like periodicity in Christian growth. And that reproach which Christians so often heap upon themselves and each other, because they are not constant and steady in their development, frequently arises from a want of knowledge of the method by which God builds up human character.

When the Lord made ants, he made them to go along with short and oft-repeated steps; but when the Lord made rabbits, he made them to jump and stop, jump and stop, jump and stop. And I think it is so with Christians. Some run with small steps, and keep running. Others take long springs, and rest between them. And these iast get over as much ground as the first. And it matters not whether a man goes by bursts, by flights, by springs, by short steps, or by crawling like a worm, if, at appropriate points, he stops, and, asking himself, "Am I, comprehensively viewed, growing?" and finds that he is. It is immaterial whether growth is periodical or continuous, if the same result is attained in one case as the other. It is the average development of character and experience, and not the special modes by which they are reached, that a man is to look at. There are seeming religious decadences which are only changes in the mode of Christian development. It is sometimes thought that a church does not grow except in times of revival. I must dissent from that view. I frequently

think that we grow more when we have not a revival in our church than when we have one. A revival is one means of growing in religion; but there is a style of work that does not require a revival for its accomplishment, which is just as indispensable to Christian life as any other. Some reject the revival part of religious growth, and believe only in the continuous part. Their criticism is wrong on the opposite side. Both things are right and proper, if they are not forced out of their appropriate place. Man was made on a more comprehensive pattern than most persons are willing to admit; and growth in Christ Jesus requires a work so voluminous, and so protracted in time, that naught but the Spirit of God can consummate it. And as forests grow, from summer to summer, according to the supervising law of the seasons, so men grow, and become cedars of Lebanon, as it were, in accordance with the law of human development in this world.

Let me say one or two words in application.

The experience in many men of what they call *re-conversion* is a genuine experience. And yet they may not have been the less truly converted before. I think there are many persons that are converted, as it were, as boats go on canals. They run along on one level till they understand all about that level, and are familiar with all the scenery that is visible from it; and by-and-by they come into a lock. There the water is let in beneath them, and they rise; and as they rise they are banged and scraped against the sides. At length they get upon another level. And then they see what they did not think of before they went into that lock of sorrow, and distress, and troubles, that lifted them up higher.

When many persons are shut up in the chamber of sickness, and it seems as though their life was being taken out of them, they are in God's lock of troubles, with God's waters under them, buoying them up. And when they have been carried up to a higher level, they look back, and say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Now I am higher than I was before, and I have a more comprehensive view of the course over which I am travelling." And when they come to another lock, they go through the same experience again. They feel the turbulent flood under them, and they are swayed to and fro, and are subjected to great suffering. But soon they find themselves on a still higher level, along which they sail until they come to yet another lock, which carries them up once more. And so God's locks lift them from level to level.

A man is converted, and he comes into the church. He is fit to be in the church because he is so bad, and has found it out. For a man that is lame in the leg, and half blind, and deaf, and without the power of digestion—is not he just the man that ought to be in the hospital, if he knows what his condition is, and wants to get well? The work of many persons during the first four or five years that they are in the church must be to make up for what you got in the family—an early Christian

education; and when, after two or three years have passed away there comes another revival, a new descent of the Holy Ghost into their hearts, they say, "Brethren, I thought I was converted several years ago; but I was not, and God has converted me now." They go on from that point five or ten years longer, when they are lifted up again; and then they say, "Twice I have been fooled; at two different times I supposed I was converted; but now my conversion is real." No, you were not deceived either time. You were converted when you started in the Christian life, later you were converted again, and now you have been converted the third time.

It would not do you any hurt, brethren, if you were converted two or three times over. Blessed be God, that there are these laws and provisions of periodicity, by which, from time to time, a man is lifted up to a higher state, in which he can travel on with new and more favourable circumstances, and with an enlarged vision. God is lifting us faster than we know, and educating us better than we will admit. All these things—the head, the heart, the soul, the body, all parts of the man—are, one after another, and in harmony, educating us, to make the manhood of the soul in Christ Jesus.

Brethren, if you have learned Christian life partially, augment your ideas respecting it. Do not consider it to be merely church life. It reaches everywhere. It comprehends street life, home life, shop life, full life, empty life, every phase of life. All things work together for the good of those that God is going to save. The taste, the understanding, the will, all parts of the human constitution, come under a special education; and when God has carried them through many many years, at last death comes. But it does not tell you what it is going to do. There is to be a glorious translation, a blessed transplantation; but what you will be, or what your condition will be, in the kingdom of God, you never will know till you get there.

Brother, you are not my brother in faults. That in you which is divine is brother to me. All in heaven and on earth are related to me by that in which they resemble Christ. Hail to that day when we shall tear away these disguises, and stand in our purified and glorified state, wondering at our own beauty, at each other's beauty, and at the glory of God, who is all, and in all!

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

“And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:15–17).

IT WILL BE OBSERVED that the Scriptures spoken of in this passage must needs be the Old Testament Scriptures; because the New Testament was not then extant. And the apostle declares the Scriptures of the Old Testament, if read, to be able, conjoined with faith in Christ Jesus, to make men wise unto salvation. You will observe that it is declared that these Scriptures were inspired of God. It is nowhere explained what *inspiration* means. There is no theory or philosophy of it propounded in any part to the sacred books. It is manifest that it is a divine influence, and inbreathing of God, upon those who wrote; but the theories of inspiration are modern and human. We may take it as stated in general that the sacred books were composed and given to the church under divine direction or influence.

The weight of this passage is not rested on the fact that Scripture is authoritative because it is of God. Very little emphasis is put upon that anywhere. It is stated, it is recognized; but it does not appear that that was deemed a matter of great importance. The weight of this passage is put upon the power of Scripture upon human character and conduct. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine”—that is, for teaching—“for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Scripture makes the test of its own validity to be in what it can do. Modern philosophy is disposed to look back and test Scripture by its origin; but the Scripture itself insists upon its validity on account of its moral power. To be sure, to some extent that very power is affected by the question of its origin and authority; but not to such an extent as theologians have been wont to suppose. For, it once being conceded that the contents of the Bible are truths, it makes no difference whether they were inbreathed upon martyrs and prophets, or whether those martyrs and prophets found them out of their own accord. For the truth is of God, whether it be found out miraculously, or from natural causes; whether it be found out through science, or through processes

of economy. The authority of truth is that it is true. It is unquestionably the case that there may be exigencies in which whether a thing is true or not will be largely determined by the question of its origin; but there is no dispute in respect to the great moral and spiritual truths of the Bible. On all the essential truths of Scripture there is an agreement between all Christians, and I might almost say between all men. As far as these are concerned, there is no longer any question as to their validity.

When things are conceded as true, there is no more power given them by the fact that they come from one or another source. A great truth declared by a child is just as potent as though it was declared by Bacon or Milton. When a thing is once known to be true, then it stands on its own merits. Although beforehand it makes a great deal of difference what bow is in the hand of the warrior, when he has drawn the bow, and the arrow has smitten between the joints of the harness, it no longer makes any difference what bow it is. And so it is with truths. When the question is how they shall authenticate themselves, and gain a lodgment in the minds of men, then it is important to know what bow sends them; but after they have been sent, after they have struck, after they have been admitted to be truths, after they have proved themselves to be divine, then it makes no difference whether they came in through the door of prophecy or through the door of science.

We are living in a time when the Bible is becoming an object of close examination. Our religious journals are full of notices of books, criticisms, discussions, doubts, and apprehensions, on the subject of the Bible. If the history of the book had not been what it has for eighteen hundred years, I might have some apprehension; but the Bible has been going through, substantially, such an ordeal as it is now going through, ever since it had an origin. Nevertheless, nothing is more common than that, when there is a fresh examination or assault of the Bible, the faith of some is undermined, the confidence of many is shaken, and not a few give themselves up to levity, and, glad to throw off moral restraint, exclaim that the end of this book has arrived, and that henceforth men are to be released from priestcraft based upon its authority.

I do not propose so much to go into a general discussion of this subject, as to throw out for your practical advantage some few suggestions in consequence of the movement of the public mind in the matter of the validity of the Scriptures.

Consider, in the first place, what this Bible is—for our education leads us into a chronic misconception of it. We speak of it as if it were one book, symmetric and related in all its parts like a book from any single mind. But the Bible is made up of fifty-seven separate books. They were written by thirty-six different writers, living hundreds of years apart, speaking different languages, being subject to different

governments and different institutions, and having no knowledge of each other's work. These fifty-seven separate books or tracts have been gathered up, and the binders have made them one—that is all. There is a moral coherence about them, there is a central moral unity to them; but as objective existences they are made to be one by the simple circumstance of juxtaposition. The writings of Jeremiah have no more relation to the writings of Moses than in the line of succession the writings of the latest chemists have to the writings of the earliest. Those of the latest include all that there was in those of the earliest; and they have the unity which consists in having the same truths in some part; but that unity is an accidental or providential one.

Consider how men reason about the Bible. They say that it contradicts itself. They say that it lacks the marks of a divine work. Consider that it is not one book, like a book on the constitution of the globe, like a book on the laws of government, or like any other book composed by one mind. It is not a book according to the modern way in which books are made. On the contrary, it is the religious works that appeared for thousands of years. It is all the religious literature of ages. It is the religious light that was developed in the world through long periods, brought together merely for convenience. There might be fifty-seven separate volumes instead of one. And between the first and the second there would be a thousand years; between the second and the third a long period would intervene; and so on. And there were thousands of years in which there was not the scratch of a pen, so far as we know. And between the writing of the first and the writing of the last, empires rose, and flourished, and stumbled, and fell, and went out of remembrance; new languages spread, and decreased, and passed away. Time performed its greatest exploits between the beginning and the ending of this so-called one book.

It is necessary, then, that we should come to the examination of Scripture bearing these facts in mind. We are to remember that it is not the production of a single author. We are to take into consideration its remarkable relations to time. We are not to forget how it comes to be gathered up and formed into one volume. And if it should be found, upon examination, that parts of the Bible are not to be held, it would not invalidate the book; because it is one book only by accident.

It has been said by a great many that the book of Esther is not a religious book. The name of God is not mentioned in it. It is the history of an Oriental dispensation; and an extraordinary history it is. Many declare that the Canticles are but the love-songs of Solomon, and cannot be justly claimed to be religious books. Then suppose these were to be slipped out of the Bible? Many would say, "Now, where is your Bible?"

Well, suppose you have a package of twenty-five titles and deeds, and suppose, as you look them over, you find among them the record of a journey to Androscoggin, and you say, "That came here by accident,"

and throw it out; and suppose your son, sitting by, should say, "Father, if that is not genuine, how do you know that the rest are?" The fact that by mistake a paper that does not belong there gets into the bundle, does not destroy the validity of the papers that are in it which do belong there. Each paper stands on its own merits. And because you put a strap around the whole, they are not so connected that if you take some out those that are left are good for nothing. And binders' leather about the Bible does not make all the books of it so one that if you impair the authority of any you impair the authority of others. You might take out Esther—I should not like to lose it; you might take out the Songs of Solomon—they are very good where they are; but that would not change the validity of the Psalms of David, nor alter the genuineness of the prophets, nor take away the authenticity of the evangelists; for these do not derive any authority or power from the fact that they stand together, and they do not lose any authority or power because any one of the books with which they are bound is shown to be unworthy of a place in the record.

I am not speaking as though I thought that any of the books of the Bible should be withdrawn; but, putting the case in the strongest light, if it were true that certain parts of the Old or New Testament should be found to be false, the Bible, as it is constructed, would not be invalidated. Bishop Colenso thinks he has shown that there are mistakes in the writings of Moses. Very likely. And suppose it should be shown that Moses did not write them at all, what then? It would be shown, that is all. And suppose they should be taken out of the Bible, what then? They would be taken out, that is all. And how would it be with those that were left? Why, they would be left, that is all.

In an apothecary's shop there stand twenty vials labelled with the names of the things that it is professed are in them; and upon examination it is found that two or three have nothing in them but water, instead of containing remedial agents. And they are removed. And what about the rest? Why, if they have in them that name of which is written on them, they are not invalidated because this and that bottle have been taken away. And if you take out of the Old Testament—what you cannot take out—the Pentateuch, you do not on that account destroy the validity of Ezekiel, or Job, or David, or Solomon's Proverbs, or the Evangelists, or the matchless Epistles of the apostles. They are what they seem to be, even if some things are not.

I make these remarks that it may be suggested to you that there is not so much importance as some attach to it in the validity, or want of validity, of some parts of Scripture; and that if this book or that should be taken from the Bible, it would not alter the fact that in that book you have a body of divine truth revealed of God, inspired by God, and "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Consider, also, the method of making the Bible. The light and the

instruction which was vouchsafed to the best men in any age was drawn up into a record; and that record represented the ripest truth to which the human mind had attained in religious ideas in that age. But we should never forget that, as everything in this world is subject to development, so is revelation itself; that as the truth could not come much faster than the human mind could receive it, the early revelation of truth, being addressed to the yet undeveloped moral sense of the world, was comparatively scant; and that there has been a constant augmentation of light from the beginning down to the present.

The truths of the earlier books of the Bible, then, were relative to the age in which they were written, and they do not profess to contain the whole truth, but only as much as had been revealed in that age. They must, therefore, stand related to us differently from what those do which have been written since.

The geography that I studied when I was a child would do me but little good now. I have outgrown it. And yet it was true, every word of it, and it was suited to my wants. Clothes that fit a child now he will soon outgrow. And truths that are revealed in the infancy of the race will not be adequate to its wants after it has advanced beyond a certain point. It will soon grow so as to require other and different truths. And in the history of mankind later periods will find – what? that what was revealed to the earlier periods was not true? No; but that it was only partial truth, that it was adapted to the special wants of those earlier periods, and that they now stand related to men differently from what they did at first.

The laws of New England that were passed during the first hundred and fifty years after the settlement of this country by the whites, although they are of great interest and of vital importance, do not bear the same relation to the people now that they did then. Subsequent legislation has included them all, and more, and they have a historic value; but they are not the same to us that they were to those whom they first concerned.

It is universally conceded that the whole religious economy of the Jews has passed away, and no one supposes that any part of the Old Testament which relates to the ceremonial law is obligatory upon us. Many things have ceased simply because better processes have, in the course of time, come in.

The books of the Bible, then, had a first work; and when they had accomplished that, they passed to a secondary use. They were more important, some of them, to the periods in which they were first revealed, than they have been to later periods, or than they are to our own time. But they have not on that account lost their use. They are valuable still, as showing the way in which man has been developed, as illustrating the method of divine teaching, and as preserving many great moral truths; but in so far as we are concerned, in this age, the Bible must be judged from what it can do for us.

A book, consisting of a large number of separate compositions which

have preserved the light of religion and knowledge through long periods of time; a book that has centred about it the ripest and best religious developments of races and centuries has been put into our hands; and the question with us is this: What is that book to us? Can it do anything for us? Can it teach us anything? What does it prove itself to be?

It proposes, in the first place, a schedule of human nature and human condition. It was not necessary to teach us that men were creatures of sorrow and trouble. It was not necessary to teach us that human passions were rampant and rioting. It was not necessary to teach us that the world groaned and travailed in pain. All history and all experience taught us that. But it was necessary to teach us that we had some relation to essential wickedness in man. It was needful to interpret the misery to which we are subjected, by some authentic statement of moral causation. It sprang from the imperfection of the human mind, and from the sin that flowed out of that imperfection. The explanation of this is indispensable to us, and nothing could ever take it out of the Bible. Go back from the time of Moses, and you will not find one single delineation of wickedness that will have to be changed. Go through all the prophets, and you will not find any delineations of pride, or selfishness, or avarice, or cruelty, or any way in which the passions of the human mind show themselves, that need to be altered by a single letter. They were true then, and they are as true now. And to-day, if you wish to describe the tyranny of monarchs in Europe, or of monarchs of the plantations in our own midst, you can nowhere else find such language and such illustrations as are given in these too often discarded books, the Old Testament. The delineations of the wickedness and depravity of the human race which are found in the Bible from beginning to end, are wonderful and masterly, and their function will never cease.

The Bible also proposes to teach us the divine disposition and will respecting sinful man. It reveals to us the lenity and amenities of God. The most important thing that the world ever learned, is that God, the just Judge, is a God of love; that while he looks upon transgression with hatred and abhorrence, he looks upon the transgressor with sorrow and yearning; and that while he forbids sin, he so forbids it as to rescue the sinner by the revelation in God's Word of the disposition of God to heal, and not to slay; to recover, and not to denounce; to restore, and not to punish. It is the most marvellous revelation of time that God loved the world, and gave his Son to die for it; that, after intimations and hints, with brighter and brighter teachings all the way down, at last arose the Sun of Righteousness, whose light burst over the whole world, and which shall never set until it has filled the world with truth and redemption through the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Will anything ever change that? Suppose the arithmetic in Moses's

books is not correct, what has that to do with this? Suppose a man should undertake to prove to me that, because my mother, in writing to me, had spelt my name wrong, the love that filled that letter was good for nothing. A letter from my mother may be addressed to me at a place where I never was; it may spell my name B-e-a-c-h-e-r instead of B-ee-c-h-e-r; it may leave out a verb here and a noun there; it may be full of mistakes; the vehicle may be as faulty as you please; but, tell me, suppose precious ointment is brought to you in a vase that is cracked and unseemly, is it not precious ointment still? And if a mother has poured out the wondrous wealth of her soul upon her child, is it of no account because the paper is coarse and old, because there are errors in the writing, and because a hundred incidental things are out of the way? The main thing, the significant thing, is, "I love thee, I gave thee life, and I will give my life for thee again"; and all the mistakes cannot take that away. And in all the Bible there is nothing that shall take away this: God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to save souls. Cipher away about Moses, fools! I will cling to the hope of Christ, and salvation by him.

Not only does the Bible teach the love of God to us that are sinners, but it points out to us, with particular minuteness, in all the phases of human life, the method of religious development. There is an importance to be attached to every part of Scripture; but I really apprehend that the parts to which we are apt to attach the most importance are the least important – namely, the schedule of moral government, and the analysis of the divine character. I do not discourage speculation and reasoning. Without them I do not think that the piety of any age can have large proportions. But we may over-estimate them. I think that the evidence of the divinity of the Bible rests more in moral precepts than in great truths which relate to God's administration and attributes. For example, the moral teachings, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" – these turn human nature end for end. I will defy anybody to find any such teachings outside of the Bible. Reason does not whisper them; nature does not speak to us of them; experience does not evolve them; and I declare that Christ's instruction is more profitable than anything else in the whole Bible. The doctrines of humility; of meekness; of gentleness; of non-resistance under injuries; the whole schedule of Christian dispositions which were marked out by the Saviour, shine as though they were so many gems and jewels brought down from the bosom of God.

The Bible likewise reveals and inspires the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave, conferred by the power of God through the love of Jesus Christ. Who wishes to take that away?

A man has long sat in a dungeon, wearing chains that will not permit him to move his length, and eating the bread and water of affliction. At last the bounty of the jailer takes off the chains, and gives him

the liberty of walking round the dungeon. And what would you think of a man, who, under such circumstances, should beseech his jailer to put on the chains again? There is one little window through which the sun finds its way into the cell, to kiss the wall and dispel the darkness, and through which the noise of the outward world comes to his ear; and suppose he should request the jailer to stop up that window, that no sound of bird, or sweet influence of nature, or light of the sun, should come through? Just like such a man is he who would take away from the teachings of the Bible the truth of immortality, and the hope of glory beyond this world. For this world is but one great dungeon. I would not live if there were only this world to live in. Blessed is he that may take his departure from it! But chains, and sorrows, and sicknesses, and troubles, are glorified the moment we perceive them to be instruments of a higher life. The moment we perceive them to be disciplinary experiences, they become so many rounds of ladders like the ladder on which Jacob saw angels ascending and descending; and on them we shall ascend to glory!

Now, you have not touched these great truths when you have made any amount of criticisms upon texts. You may shift books, and change the names of authors, and show that parts of the books of Moses were written after Moses died, and discover errors in chronology, and take the crown from the head of one monarch and put it on the head of another; you may show that there are innumerable mistakes in the vehicle of revelation; but does anything change the great central truths in which the destiny of man is wrapped up, and on which the hopes of the human family rest? They are not changed.

The questions, then, which every one of us should propound in respect to Scripture, are these: Does it teach the truth on these fundamental matters? Does it teach that which is important? Are the things that it teaches authenticated in the experience of men? Is there any other motive or instruction that should be substituted for it? We have had this book for thousands of years. Generations of wise men have grown up under it. And can you show me any treatise, or any line of sermons, bearing on the subjects of which it treats, that is anything more than a weak dilution of Bible? A sermon is generally a large tumbler of water, and the text is a lump of sugar. The lump of sugar diffused through a great quantity of fluid makes a sermon. A sermon is a weak decoction of Bible. And among all that has been published on ethical subjects, on science, on sociology, on physical economy, can you find any book that so inspires courage and hope, and correct judgment, and love of holiness, as the Bible does? Where is the book that could take the place of it? Does not the world want it? Are men trooping with such hot haste toward heaven, and away from hell, that we can afford to lay aside all means of grace? Is pride so nearly eradicated that we can afford to put away the hoe? Are the weeds of the human soul so well managed that there is no further

need of cultivation? On the contrary, is not the old heart in man throbbing, throbbing, and throbbing yet? Are not the customs of the world as much as ever toward animalism, and pride, and selfishness, and avarice? Is there not the same need of setting spiritual truths home to the conscience and understanding of men that there was a thousand years ago, or five hundred years ago, or a hundred years ago? There is that boiling, seething cauldron of sin, the human heart, and here is this power of truth, and of the Divine Spirit, by which to cleanse and purify this fountain of iniquity; and is there no need of the application of such a power? Or, is there any substitute for it?

But what if men say, "Suppose it is all so, how do we know that the Bible is true?" Here is a medical book that is said to have been found in the Pyramids, and that purports to have been divinely authorised. It is a book that teaches the nature of diseases, and the appropriate remedies for them. On looking at the contents, we find fevers, and dropsies, and wounds, and the various ailments to which the human body is subject, treated; and, as we read over the methods of treatment, they strike us as being wise methods. Now, what would be the proper test of this book? Would it not be to take the diseases for which it prescribes, and treat them according to its prescriptions, and see what the effect would be? And suppose a man should take twenty-five or thirty fevers, and treat the first according to the book, and have the patient get well; the second according to the old method, and lose the patient; and the third, the fourth, the fifth, and all the rest according to the book, and have them all get well; suppose he should find that so far as the prescriptions were followed the patients recovered, and that where they were not the patients died, would you want any other test of the book than that upon practice it proved itself to be true?

You see a recipe for making bread. What is the way to test that recipe, but to put the materials together according to its direction? If the bread is good, the recipe is good, is it not? If it is good, I do not care where it came from—I do not care if King Pharaoh wrote it; and if it is not good, I would not care any more for it if it came from the angel Gabriel. If the devil gave me a recipe, and on trial it was found to be good, I should not care any less for it on account of the source from which it came. It is the *thing* that proves the thing. The effect proves what is the nature of the cause. And if there are prescriptions in God's Word to heal pride, and selfishness, and all forms of sin and diseases, and on trial the prescriptions are found to do what they profess to be able to do, the effect justifies the cause.

Now, the Bible does not profess to be a book of theories or philosophies. It professes to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof"—it is the best book in this world for all sorts of reproof addressed to the weaknesses and wants of human life—"for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Where a man wants to be a good man, where a man

wants to be thoroughly furnished, and he goes to the Bible, he will have the best evidence that any man can have that it is a divine book; for it will furnish him with those things which his experience shows him he needs.

Here is a roll of charts of a difficult harbour. They were drawn, it may be, by Robert Small. They are handed by him to Admiral Dupont. The Admiral, the moment he sees them, laughs right out, and says, "Do you call this a chart?" It was made with a burnt stick. Robert Small, you know, was a slave; and he had to get his knowledge as other slaves get theirs. He was a pilot in Charleston harbour, however, and he knows where the shallow places are, where the deep places are, where the obstructions are, and where it is clear sailing; and he makes a rough sketch of the whole vicinity, and puts it into Admiral Dupont's hand; and the Admiral says, "Do you suppose I am going to steer my ships by a chart that a nigger made?" Or he says, "When did you make this? On what kind of a table did you make it? What did you use to make it with?" Does he say this? Under such circumstances what would Admiral Dupont do, who is a sensible man, and who has so much sense that he knows how to employ Negroes, and take the advantage of their aid? He would say to those under him, "Take a cutter, man it, and go out, and sound, and see if the chart is correct"; and they would find the shoals and channels to be just as they were represented to be; and after they had put the chart to proof, and found it to correspond to the fact, they would report to him, and he would say, "That is a good chart, if a black man did make it. It is true, and that is the reason why it is good."

Now, the Bible is a chart. It teaches men how to steer where that sandbank of temptation is; where that rock of danger is; where that whirling vortex of passion is. The Bible is a chart of salvation; and if a man only knows his course by this, he will go through life, with all its storms, and come safely into the port of heaven.

The way to test the Bible is not to criticise it, and compare its rude marking with the more modern ways of making charts: the way to test the Bible is to put your sounding lines into the channel, and try it, and see if it is not true. But that is the test men do not employ.

Except a man be converted, and become as a little child, he shall in no case come into the kingdom of heaven. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit, because they are to be experimentally learned. Ah! it is experience that is wanted. You do not believe the Bible. Why? Because you do not practise it. It is very hard for a man to say, "I have done wrong." A man's whole nature revolts at it. The Bible says to him, "I will prove to you that I am a divine book, if you will acknowledge that you have done wrong, and earnestly say that you are willing to repair it, and to the utmost of your ability endeavour to do right." That is one of the proofs of the Bible; for the moment you have done that there will be such an evidence in you of

the wisdom and power of the Book, that you will say, "It must be of God."

The Bible makes a declaration in respect to happiness, as founded on the law of love. It says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. All the world disbelieves it, and insists on trying the other thing. Men everywhere are trying to be happy: one by pride; another by selfishness; another by lust; another by ambition; another by power; and all by things addressed to the senses. When the Word of God is standing and crying, as by the voice of one in the wilderness, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," we are all insisting upon it that it is more blessed to receive than to give; and so the heart, ever greedy, swirls like a vortex, and draws what it can, and is still drawing, unsatisfied and unhappy. Here and there a man has put the Bible to the test, and found happiness, and peace, and joy; and men, looking at him, say, "It is strange that men should be happy in such circumstances of life as his." But what are circumstances of life to a man whose heart is right with God?

The Bible is a book that was meant to renovate human nature, and prepare men to live here, and in the world to come; and a few experiments in respect to its moral instructions will go farther towards establishing its validity than all the criticisms and philosophies in the world.

Lastly, let none be alarmed lest the Bible should lose ground. It would not make any difference if you took away half of it. Do you suppose that when the cluster is crushed it is gone and lost? Its juice goes to wine, and is saved. You are not going to crush the Bible to do anything more than to turn it into wine. Its external form may be changed; the mere historical methods by which its teachings were communicated to men may be modified; but in so far as it is a vehicle of real truths, it will endure, and you cannot prevent it.

There is this about the Word of God: it coincides with the fundamental nature of man. It interprets that nature. It has hit upon a way in which it may be reorganized, and carried above the animal to the spiritual, and made partaker of the Divine nature. That has been found out, and nothing can destroy the knowledge of it. You cannot turn it back. You cannot overlay the truth. And the book that contains this inestimable treasure is not going to be dispossessed or laid aside.

I beg, therefore, that any who are timid on this subject, and who fear that the foundations of faith are about to be removed, will be reassured. Why, the foundations of faith have been on the point of being removed five hundred times, and have never yet been stirred. The Lord standeth sure; and if there is authority in the Bible, and in the Spirit of God, that goes with a faithful hearing of the truth, and an attempt to practise it, you need not be disturbed. Do not be afraid that the stars will be taken out of the heavens because astronomers are quarrelling among themselves. It makes no difference what astro-

nomers do, the stars are there, and will be forever. Men have their theories about the Bible, some of which are true, and some false; and the result of investigation may be that some of these theories will come to naught; but in the main, the Word of God, being the repository of the mightiest truths in the world, will move like the stars in heaven, which are so high that the storms never reach them, and the winds never blow them out.

Avoid, I beseech of you, that shallowest, meanest, and most contemptible of all experiences, the rattle-brain experience of those sciolists who say that the divinity of the Bible is disproved, and that its authority is destroyed. There are many persons who seem to think that they are called upon to express scepticism. They seem to think that it is manly to doubt. On the contrary, manhood is built up by believing; and a man recedes from manhood just in the proportion in which he doubts, and doubts permanently; and of all unbelieving, that of a fool is the most to be despised.

Let scholars, then, to whom this inquiry appropriately belongs, conduct their investigations. Let the shell, the rind, the crust of Scripture, take its fate. It will come out right in the end. Meanwhile, that which is the essential thing in the Word of God—its power to cleanse the heart, and change the life, and prepare the soul for immortality—is yours. Take that; try it; follow it.

I wish I could have infused into the memory of every young man and maiden of my charge the Proverbs of Solomon, the Psalms, the Evangelists, and the three or four last chapters of the Epistles, where the arguments, being finished, are applied to the ethical side of life. Those, committed to memory, would give you more practical wisdom, and would do you more good, than all the other books of the Bible.

Study God's Word, not for curiosity, not for controversy, and not for philosophy; but to see how it is the man of your counsel, and your guide. It may lead you from step to step, through purity, to immortality and glory.

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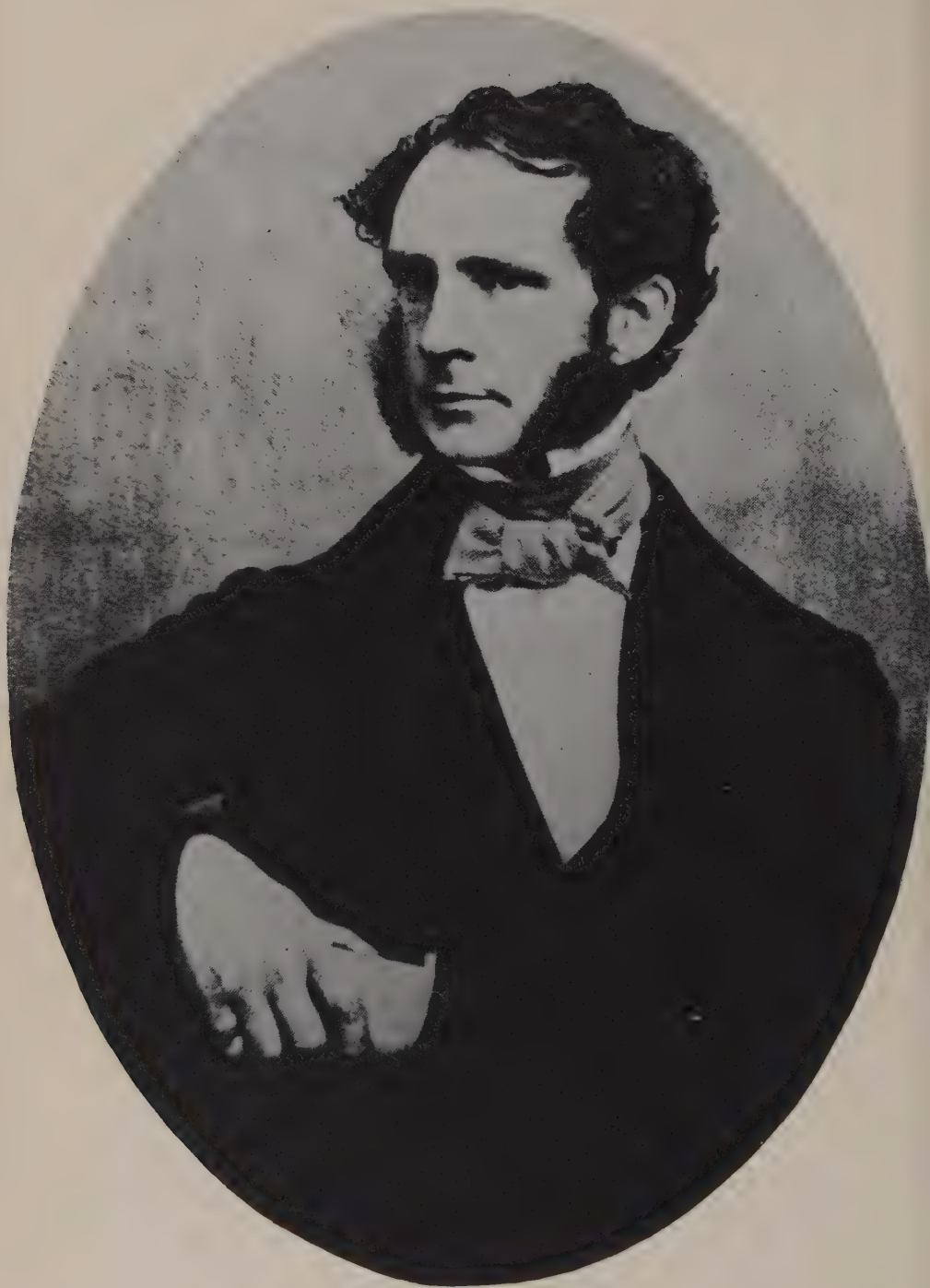
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F. W. ROBERTSON

1816 - 1853



F. W. ROBERTSON, from a rare photograph in the Library of Brasenose College, Oxford.

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON

1816	<i>Born February 3 in London</i>
1837	<i>Entered Oxford University to study for the ministry</i>
1840	<i>Ordained a minister in the Anglican church and served as curate in Winchester</i>
1842	<i>Began ministry in Cheltenham</i>
1846	<i>Traveled to the Continent</i>
1847	<i>Began service in Trinity Chapel, Brighton</i>
1852	<i>Suffered break in health</i>
1853	<i>Died August 16 at Brighton</i>

“THE GREATEST PREACHER of the nineteenth century”—“the most spiritual of all the preachers of the century”—“the most gifted English preacher”—“the most remarkable English preacher of the nineteenth century”—such phrases by scholars are heaped liberally upon Frederick W. Robertson. But to Robertson, they would seem strange words indeed. After only thirteen years of active ministry, he died at the age of thirty-seven. He felt his life had been singularly unsuccessful; in fact, at the time of his death, he was relatively unknown. Yet within a few years his fame had spread throughout the world. All of these events are even more ironic since Robertson entered the ministry reluctantly and never relinquished his love for a military career.

LIFE AND TIMES

His interest in the military came to him from his family. His grandfather, his father, and his brothers were all military men. He grew up as a lad in a fort and was surrounded by mili-

tary talk. Though he desperately wanted to become a military officer, his father discouraged him. A devout Christian, he desired his son to enter the ministry; but Frederick rebelled at the idea. He declared, "Anything but that; I am not fit for it."

After applying for a military appointment, Frederick began to prepare for his chosen career. He learned to ride, shoot, and administrate. But no appointment came. His father and others encouraged him to pursue the ministry. Finally, in 1837, he entered Oxford University to begin study for the ministry. A few weeks later news of an appointment came, but Frederick turned his back on the military offer and remained in Oxford. He was a brilliant student and mastered every subject, religious or scientific. His quick mind devoured the classics, poetry, and theological literature. Gifted at memorization, he committed huge portions of the Bible to memory and also stored other literature in his mind.

While at Oxford, he encountered the Tractarian movement and heard the preaching of John Henry Newman. Deeply impressed with Newman, he listened to him eagerly; a few years later, however, he devoted himself to refuting Newman's views. Though impressed by the lives of the men who headed the Tractarian movement, Robertson refused to accept their views on the church and theology.

At this time he was a low churchman; that is, though a member of the Anglican church, he adhered to evangelical views. His primary concern was "the saving of souls." He used the language of the evangelical and found high churchmanship to be distasteful. Although he excelled as a scholar, he made few friends. Shy and withdrawn, Robertson preferred the solitude of study to the chatter of a social evening.

Ordained a minister in the Anglican church in 1840 following his graduation from Oxford, he became involved in active church work. He served as curate in a large parish in Winchester. The parish was filled with thousands of poor people living in wretched hovels. He immediately began an intense ministry to the poor. Dashing from house to house, he ministered in the squalor of the slums, sympathized with the individual needs, and helped in material ways when he could.

At Winchester he continued the rigorous schedule which he had adopted as a student. Arising early in the morning, he immediately began to study without taking time for breakfast. He spent the morning in intense study, the afternoon in visita-

tion, and the evenings in discussion with his rector. No time was put aside for entertainment, exercise, or socializing. Such a schedule took a toll on his health and ultimately dragged him to the grave before he was forty.

Under the pressures of his self-imposed schedule, his health broke at Winchester. Physicians commanded him to leave his work and go to Switzerland. He traveled on the Continent, walked up the Rhine, and vacationed in the Alps. The exercise and relaxation partially restored his health. He developed friendships with several persons in Geneva, and on this trip he met and married Helen Denys, the daughter of an English baronet.

In 1842 he returned to England and became curate in Cheltenham. By this time he had encountered the two main issues which were to consume his energies: the relation of religion and science, and the place of the church in the social revolution of the nineteenth century.

The England of his day was in swift transition. There was transition in theology; the influence of German philosophy and biblical criticism had created tension among churchmen in England. The liberals welcomed inquiry and encouraged discussion; the conservatives feared the new trends and attempted to stifle inquiry. The conservatives held tenaciously to the literal interpretation of the Bible in spite of conflict with science; the liberals endeavored to relate religion and science in a creative way. Robertson did not align strictly with either camp, but he did argue for freedom and independence of inquiry. He insisted that there was no basic conflict between true religion and true science. He declared that Christianity had nothing to fear from an avid pursuit of truth.

Robertson also lived in a time of transition in politics. On the Continent, monarchies toppled like rows of dominoes. In England agitation for reform rocked the country. Cries for socialism shattered the once capitalistic unity of England. While Robertson was preaching the gospel, Karl Marx was working in the libraries of London writing the *Communist Manifesto*. Though he repudiated socialism, Robertson aligned himself with the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. He was a creative and outspoken advocate of economic and political reform.

As Robertson faced the complex issues of his time, he stood squarely for progress. Robertson's biographer said, "He had no

fear of God's truth being overwhelmed. To him Christianity could not be in danger. . . . It was not the stir, or enquiry, or scepticism, which he feared, but unrelenting conservatism and stagnation."¹ In his preaching and ministry he challenged obscurantism. He urged men to walk new paths and to open their eyes to a new day and to a new world.

Cheltenham was a health resort. People crowded there from all over England seeking cures in the waters. It was especially a favorite gathering place for evangelicals. Though reared in the evangelical tradition, Robertson became more and more impatient with the evangelical line of thought; to him it was timid when outspoken courage was needed. He sensed that many evangelicals were shallow and lived more on slogans than on true spirituality. The intolerance and harsh criticisms of many evangelicals, based on nothing more than hearsay, shocked and repulsed him.

As he retreated from the evangelical position, Robertson refused to sound the shibboleths which would have won the favor of evangelicals. Earlier he had repudiated the high church branch of Anglicanism. Increasingly the ground on which he stood was cut out from under him: he aligned neither with the right nor with the left—and the middle of the road steadily narrowed under the assault of harsh rebuke and attack. His life at Cheltenham grew more unpleasant with each passing day.

The circumstance in which Robertson found himself created internal chaos. He had released his hold on previous thought patterns and beliefs but had not yet grasped a new way. He floundered and doubted; his life and preaching demonstrated his uncertainty. During this period he wrote to a friend: "A man ought to burn his own smoke if he cannot convert it into clear flame. I am quite willing to struggle on in twilight until the light comes. Manly struggle cannot fail. Only a man must struggle alone. His own view of truth, or rather his own way of viewing it and that alone, will give him rest."

The rigors of his work in Cheltenham coupled with his lack of exercise and his internal turmoil again broke his health. In 1846 he headed for the Continent to find restoration of body

1. Stopford A. Brooke, *Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson*, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1901), 1: xix.

and mind. Amidst the soaring Alps, he struggled with his fears and doubts. At last he conquered his misgivings about his faith and attained new convictions. Later in a lecture to the working people of Brighton he revealed some of his feelings about this crisis:

It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditional opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour . . . when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shrivelled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God Himself has disappeared.

In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counselors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle his doubts, which for aught he knows may arise from the fountain of truth itself; to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which for aught he knows may be light from heaven, and everything seems wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality.

In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward.

Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed . . . because his night shall pass into clear bright day . . . with a faith, and hope, and trust no longer traditional, but of his own. . . .²

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 103-4.

After three months, Robertson returned to Cheltenham. In many ways, he was a new man at the age of thirty. He requested a parish of his own; he no longer wanted to serve as a curate to a rector. His correspondence reveals his enthusiasm over his newly found faith: "I would not exchange the light I have for the twilight I have left for all that the earth can give. Clear, brighter light every day and more assurance of what truth is and whom I serve. I walk not in doubt but in the light of noon-day certainty."³

After a brief time of service at St. Ebbe's, Oxford, he became rector of Trinity Chapel, Brighton. Brighton was a fun resort; the wealthy and the wayward flocked to the shores for play and frolic. Numerous retired persons of the aristocracy resided there. Nevertheless, Robertson soon found himself engulfed in controversy and turmoil.

Early in 1848 he began a course of lectures on the book of Samuel. In his teachings he commented upon the topics which are dealt with in the book: the rights of rulers, the rights of property, the rights of labor, the brotherhood of man. Immediately a protest was raised by the conservatives. Robertson was charged with being a revolutionist and a democrat. A letter to his bishop charged him with being a political subversive and preaching in a manner calculated to disturb the feelings of the working people of Brighton. He was charged with being a radical both in politics and in religion.

Robertson was astonished when these charges burst upon him. In a letter to a friend he wrote:

When I first heard the charge of radicalism, some time back, I was astounded. . . . I had tried to *feel* the meaning of Christ's words, and to make my heart beat with His; and so I became what they call a Radical. Nevertheless, the Radicals and Chartists refuse to own me as brother, and call me a rabid Tory. However, of one thing I have become distinctly conscious—that my motto for life, my whole heart's expression, is "None but Christ"; not in the (so-called) evangelical sense, which I take to be the sickliest cant that has appeared since the Pharisees bare record to the gracious words which He spake, and then tried to cast Him headlong from the hill of Nazareth; but in a deeper real sense—

3. Ibid., 2:99.

the mind of Christ; to feel as He felt; to judge the world and to estimate the world's maxims as He judged and estimated.⁴

In spite of the criticism, he refused to abandon his friendly and sympathetic interest with the working classes. In many ways his cause was in common with that of Kingsley and Maurice. The evangelical newspapers hounded him. Because he was a political progressive, they seemed to assume that he must also be a liberal in theology. Actually, Robertson was too much of an aristocrat to be a thoroughgoing revolutionary. Yet his heart beat with the poor and he desired for them a new and better life.

Robertson did not openly vent his anger concerning the criticism heaped on him, but he did reveal in letters how deeply he was hurt. He displayed a meek and gentle spirit and suffered slander without refuting it. Because of his brilliant preaching and his Christlike life, the masses crowded to hear him at Trinity Chapel. All classes of persons thronged to his sermons: Lady Byron and other members of the literary class, the aristocracy, the servants, the working men, the young, the old, the agnostics, the devout—all thrilled at his message, though all did not agree with his views.

Superiors in the church recognized his ability but feared his forthrightness. They urged him to tone down his expressions. Robertson refused: he thought the greatest peril facing the church was that men who were set apart to speak the truth and live above the world would substitute conventional opinions for eternal truth. He sacrificed his own personal advancement for dedication to principle.

His work consumed his strength. His health, never good, continued to worsen. He wrote, "I am thoroughly worn and sore with work. . . . The usual result has followed—low spirits and deep depression. In such moods, I can see nothing truly—all is black and hopeless; but as I know the cause to be chiefly physical, I resolve to give no utterance to transient feeling, but wait until the cloud passes."⁵ At last he took up exercise, restful walks, and rest periods. But it was too late. His health was gone.

His physical condition began to affect more and more his mental state. His morbidity increased: extremely self-critical,

4. *Ibid.*, 2:163-64.

5. *Ibid.*, 2:119.

he became such a perfectionist that he refused any praise. Shattered nerves, tortured body, and mental fatigue should have turned him to less work and more rest—but the opposite was the case. Soon the beginning of the end came. He wrote, "Whole tracts of brain seem to be losing their faculty and becoming quite torpid and impotent." He lamented, "Memory and grasp are both going, and with an incessant call for fresh thought, this feeling is a more than ordinarily painful one."⁶ He was an old man at thirty-six. In August of 1853, his life finally burned out.

High and low church Anglicans, Jews, Quakers, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, nonconformists, rich and poor, liberals and conservatives—all mourned the death of this young, brilliant pastor. On his marble monument they wrote: "He awakened the holiest feelings in poor and in rich, in ignorant and in learned. Therefore is he lamented as their guide and comforter."

PREACHING AND SERMONS

The story of Robertson's preaching is as remarkable as the story of his life. Only one of his sermons, "The Israelites' Grave in a Foreign Land," was published before his death. This sermon was preached on the first day of public mourning for the dowager queen, the widow of William IV, in December, 1849. In the preface to it he says:

The sermon is published as nearly as possible as it was spoken. It was written out concisely for a friend on the day of its delivery, with no intention of publication. Afterward it seemed better to leave it in that state with only a few corrections and the addition of a few sentences, than to attempt to rewrite it after an interval too great to recall what has been said.

Only after the death of Robertson were his sermons collected and published; all of them are in the same uncorrected form as the one published during his lifetime. The form in which we now have his sermons is brief, perhaps much briefer than when he preached them, since Robertson wrote his sermons on the Sunday night after he had preached them, never before. But from the description others have given of his preaching his

6. *Ibid.*, 2:198-99.

delivered sermons must have been little different from the printed sermons, except somewhat fuller.

Considering the shortness of his ministry—among notable preachers only McCheyne died at an earlier age—and the absence of published sermons during his lifetime, Robertson's widespread influence is all the more surprising. But with the posthumous publication of his sermons and letters by Stopford Brooke, preachers around the world were fascinated by the genius of Robertson. He has been especially remembered as the father of the two-point sermon. Others had used the two-point sermon before him, but no one else used it so frequently or so well. His method seemed to accentuate the clarity and simplicity of his messages and lent a subtle stylistic flavor to his sermons.

Preachers of his own day were extravagant in their praise of these sermons; modern preaching masters such as Luccock, Bowie, and Fosdick, have been equally enthusiastic. Fosdick said:

One of the greatest preachers in the English-speaking world was Robertson of Brighton in the Nineteenth Century. We modern preachers still prime our pumps with his Sermons, because they contain so much permanent suggestiveness. Like every other great believer, he had to fight for his faith and draw himself together around the few things that he found certain. Because he did that, his certainty grew and heightened until he became one of the shining peaks of English-speaking Christianity.⁷

Blackwood agreed that Robertson exercised much influence over modern homiletical thought: "Through [his written sermons] Robertson has profoundly influenced the teaching of homiletics, as well as the popular preaching of our day."⁸

The excellent content of Robertson's sermons was largely due to his intensive study. He read and profited from many writers; Tennyson and Dante particularly influenced his thought. He read Dante daily and was said to have committed the whole of the *Inferno* to memory (not exactly encouraging reading for

7. James R. Blackwood, *The Soul of Frederick W. Robertson* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947), p. x.

8. Andrew W. Blackwood, *Preaching from the Bible* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1941), p. 22.

one with such a depressed mentality!). He was fascinated by his contemporary, Tennyson, and devoured his poems as soon as they appeared. He considered "In Memoriam" "the most precious work published in this century."⁹

Robertson said of his study: "I read Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Coleridge, Phillip Van Artevelde, for views of man to meditate upon, instead of theological caricatures of humanity; and I go into the country to *feel* God; dabble in chemistry, to feel awe of him; read the life of Christ, to understand, love, and adore Him; and my experience is closing into this, that I turn with disgust from everything to Christ."¹⁰

Robertson's study of the Bible was intense; he studied the Gospels until the personality of Christ became as real to him as anyone he knew. He studied the Bible devotionally every morning and spent hours in careful sermon preparation. Robertson owed most of his love for the Bible to his evangelical parents; he had learned much also about the secrets of effective preaching from evangelical ministers. At the beginning of his ministry he was not careful about his study. While associated with Archibald Boyd, his rector at Cheltenham, he began the practice of careful preparation of his sermons that he retained throughout his short career.

Boyd also influenced him toward the two-point sermon development. Robertson's choice of this method was not casual but based upon his own philosophy. As his thinking about preaching slowly evolved, Robertson formulated six principles that greatly influenced his manner of preaching: the establishment of positive truth instead of the negative destruction of error; the belief that spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit instead of by intellectual proposition, and therefore truth should be taught suggestively rather than dogmatically; the belief that the human character of Christ's humanity must be antecedent to belief in his divine origin; that Christianity works from the inward to the outward; that truth is made up of two opposite propositions, not to be found in a *via media* between the two; and that there is the soul of goodness in things apparently evil.

The duality of Robertson's thought can be seen in each of these propositions. Robertson sought for texts which seemed to express the kind of paradox that he regarded as basic to truth;

9. Ibid., p. 160.

10. Ibid., p. 110.

furthermore, he looked for such opposing poles in all of the texts which he studied. Robertson gave to his bishop the following account of his method of preparing his sermon:

The word *extempore* does not exactly describe the way I preach. I first make copious notes; then draw out a form (rough plan); afterwards write copiously, sometimes twice or thrice, the thoughts, to disentangle them and arrange them into a connected whole; then I make a syllabus, and lastly, a skeleton which I take into the pulpit.¹¹

Robertson's biographer, Stopford Brooke, says of Robertson's preparation:

He endeavored to receive, without the intervention of commentators, immediate impressions from the Bible. To these impressions he added the individual life of his own heart, and his knowledge of life of the great world. He preached these impressions with the freedom, independence, variety, and influence which were the legitimate children of his individuality.¹²

Robertson often preached on such themes as sensual and spiritual excitement, worldliness, and the illusiveness of life.¹³ He preached upon all of these themes with great intensity; yet because of the sheer massiveness of his thinking and intellect, if for no other reason, he was never really understood. He found himself under attack from both sides of every argument and every wing of both sides. But he did his best to answer his critics by a careful Christian statement of positive truths; his sermons never degenerated in their tone, even in the depths of the misery into which his sensitive spirit was plunged.

Congregations who heard him were often enthralled by his preaching. One of his constant hearers said:

I cannot describe . . . in words the strange sensation, during his sermon, of union with him and communion with one another which filled us as he spoke. I used to feel as if every one in the congregation must be thrill-

11. Brooke, 2:151.

12. Ibid., 2:238-39.

13. James Blackwood, p. 70.

ing with *my* emotion, and that *his* suppressed excitement was partly due to his consciousness of *our* excitement. Nor can I describe the sense we had of a higher Presence with us as he spoke—the sacred awe which filled our hearts—the hushed stillness in which the smallest sound was startling—the calmed eagerness of men who listened as if waiting for a word of revelation to resolve the doubt or to heal the sorrow of a life—the unexpected light which came upon the faces of some when an expression struck home and made them feel—in a moment of high relief from pain and doubt—This man speaks to *me*, and his words are inspired by God.

And when the close came, and silence almost awful fell upon the church, even after a sigh of relief from strained attention had ceased to come from all the congregation, I've often seen men so rapt that they could not move till the sound of the organ aroused them to the certainty that the preacher had ceased to speak.¹⁴

Robertson depended upon the clarity of his arrangement to aid him in delivery. He planned his divisions and kept to them from the beginning to the end of his sermon without using the few notes he carried with him. Sometimes he would even crumple in his hand the sheet of rough notes he carried with him into the pulpit. Robertson's mind was full of his subject and he spoke out of his thorough preparation; but he never relied entirely on his prodigious memory:

Now, without method memory is useless. Detached facts are practically valueless. All public speakers know the value of method. Persons not accustomed to it imagine that a speech is learnt by heart. Knowing a little about the matter, I will venture to say that if anyone attempted that plan, either he must have a marvellous memory, or else he would break down three times out of five. It simply depends upon correct arrangement. The words and sentences are left to the moment; the thoughts methodised beforehand: and the words, if the thoughts are rightly arranged, will place themselves.¹⁵

14. Brooke, 2:270.

15. Ibid., 2:126.

Robertson was self-restrained and cautious in his delivery. His gestures were subdued; his voice—described as musical, clear and penetrating—seldom rose in volume; and when it did, it was with a deep sound which was not loud, “but toned like a great bell.”

“The New Commandment of Love to One Another” is one of the finest expositions of John 13:34 ever written. Robertson’s two-point development makes a natural exposition of a profound truth. His descriptive abilities—at their highest, unexcelled by anyone—can be observed in the following passage:

Doubtless the memory of each one of us will furnish him with the picture of some member of the family whose very presence seemed to shed happiness: a daughter perhaps, whose light step even in the distance irradiated everyone’s countenance. What was the secret of such an one’s power? What had she done?

Absolutely nothing; but radiant smiles, beaming good humor, the tact of divining what everyone felt and everyone wanted, told that she had got out of self and learned to think for others; so that at one time it showed itself deprecating the quarrel, which lowering brows and raised tones already showed to be impending, by sweet words; at another, by soothing an invalid’s pillow; at another, by soothing a sobbing child; at another, by humoring and softening a father who had returned weary and ill-tempered from the irritating cares of business. None but she saw those things. None but a loving heart could see them.

Robertson’s sermon “The Shadow and the Substance of the Sabbath” shows plainly how controversial Robertson could be. Although this sermon is one of the finest ever written on the subject of Sabbath observance, it is easy to imagine the furor it caused when it was preached. Robertson states the problem in the opening lines:

No sophistry of criticism can explain away the obvious meaning of these words. The apostle speaks of certain institutions as Jewish: shadowy: typical: and among these we are surprised to find the sabbath-days. . . . This, then, is the first thing we lay down—a very simple postulate, one would think—when the apostle says the sabbath-days, he means the sabbath-days.

Peculiar difficulties attend the discussion of the subject of the sabbath. . . . For if we must choose between Puritan over-precision on the one hand, and on the other that laxity which, in many parts of the Continent, has marked the day from other days only by more riotous worldliness, and a more entire abandonment of the whole community to amusement, no Christian would hesitate: no English Christian at least. . . .

In the same sermon Robertson makes a splendid transition from his introduction to the body of the sermon:

There is, then, in the sabbath that which is shadowy and that which is substantial; that which is transient and that which is permanent; that which is temporal and typical, and that which is eternal. The shadow and the body. Hence a very natural and simple division of our subject suggests itself. I. The transient shadow of the sabbath which has passed away. II. The permanent substance which cannot pass.

As he applied the meaning of this text to his hearers, Robertson struck home with a sharp application:

Tell us then, ye who are servants of the letter, and yet do not scruple to use a carriage to convey you to some church where a favourite minister is heard, is that a spiritual necessity or a spiritual luxury? Part of the Sunday meal of all of you is the result of a servant's work. Tell us then, ye accurate logicians, who say that nothing escapes the rigour of the prohibition which is not necessary or merciful, Is a hot repast a work of necessity or a work of mercy? Oh! it rouses in every true soul a deep indignation to hear men who drive their cattle to church on Sundays, because they are too emasculated to trudge through cold and rain on foot, invoke the severity of an insulted Law of the Decalogue on those who provide facilities of movement for such as cannot afford the luxury of a carriage. What, think you, would He who blighted the Pharisees with such burning words, have said, had He been present by, while men, whose servants clean their houses, and prepare their meals, and harness their horses, stand up to denounce the service on some railway by which the poor are helped to health and enjoyment? Hired service for the

rich is a necessity—hired service for the poor is a desecration of the sabbath! It is right that a thousand should toil for the few and private! It is past bearing in a Christian country that a few should toil for thousands on the sabbath-day!

The interesting sermon "The Orphanage of Moses" was delivered by Robertson to raise funds for the "Female Orphan Asylum"; it is typical of his ethical concerns. On the other hand, his sermon "The Power of Sorrow" shows Robertson upon an eloquent and sublime theme. Again he states his thesis in the opening sentence: "That which is chiefly insisted on in this verse is the distinction between sorrow and repentance. To grieve over sin is one thing, to repent of it is another."

His illustrations in "The Power of Sorrow" are particularly interesting. In one, Robertson refers to a corpse found in an iceberg; in another, he refutes an expression of Newman, whose preaching he admired greatly, but whose doctrine he opposed:

"The true penitent," says Mr. Newman, "never forgives himself." Oh false estimate of the gospel of Christ and of the heart of man! A proud remorse does not forgive itself the forfeiture of its own dignity; but it is the very duty of the penitence which is according to God, that at last the sinner, realizing God's forgiveness, does learn to forgive himself.

The most notable quality in all of these sermons is the excellence of his exposition and the clarity of his development. Because of its honest biblical instruction and straightforward homiletical development, the preaching of Robertson has never lost its appeal.

Sermons

THE SHADOW AND THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SABBATH

“Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17).

NO SOPHISTRY OF CRITICISM can explain away the obvious meaning of these words. The apostle speaks of certain institutions as Jewish: shadowy: typical: and among these we are surprised to find the sabbath-days. It has been contended that there is here no allusion to the seventh day of rest, but only to certain Jewish holidays, not of Divine institution. But, in the first place, the “holidays” have been already named in the same verse; in the next we are convinced that no plain man, reading this verse for the first time, without a doctrine to support, would have put such an interpretation upon the word: and we may be sure that St. Paul would never have risked so certain a misconstruction of his words by the use of an ambiguous phrase. This, then, is the first thing we lay down—a very simple postulate, one would think—when the apostle says the sabbath-days, he means the sabbath-days.

Peculiar difficulties attend the discussion of the subject of the sabbath. If we take the strict and ultra ground of sabbath observance, basing it on the rigorous requirements of the fourth commandment, we take ground which is not true; and all untruth, whether it be an over-statement or a half-truth, recoils upon itself. If we impose on men a burden which cannot be borne, and demand a strictness which, possible in theory, is impossible in practice, men recoil; we have asked too much, and they give us nothing—the result is an open, wanton, and sarcastic desecration of the Day of Rest.

If, on the other hand, we state the truth, that the sabbath is obsolete—a shadow which has passed—without modification or explanations,

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evidently there is a danger no less perilous. It is true to spiritual, false to unspiritual men; and a wide door is opened for abuse. And to recklessly loosen the hold of a nation on the sanctity of the Lord's Day would be most mischievous—to do so wilfully would be an act almost diabolical. For if we must choose between Puritan over-precision on the one hand, and on the other that laxity which, in many parts of the Continent, has marked the day from other days only by more riotous worldliness, and a more entire abandonment of the whole community to amusement, no Christian would hesitate: no English Christian at least; to whom that day is hallowed by all that is endearing in early associations, and who feels how much it is the very bulwark of his country's moral purity.

Here, however, as in other cases, it is the half-truth which is dangerous—the other half is the corrective; the whole truth alone is safe. If we say the sabbath is shadow, this is only half the truth. The apostle adds, "the body is of Christ."

There is, then, in the sabbath that which is shadowy and that which is substantial; that which is transient and that which is permanent; that which is temporal and typical, and that which is eternal. The shadow and the body. Hence, a very natural and simple division of our subject suggests itself.

I. The transient shadow of the sabbath which has passed away.

II. The permanent substance which cannot pass.

I. The transient shadow which has passed away.

The history of the sabbath-day is this. It was given by Moses to the Israelites, partly as a sign between God and them, marking them off from all other nations by its observance; partly as commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt. And the reason why the seventh day was fixed on, rather than the sixth or eighth was, that on that day God rested from His labour. The soul of man was to form itself on the model of the Spirit of God. It is not said, that God at the creation gave the sabbath to man, but that God rested at the close of the six days of creation: whereupon he had blessed and sanctified the seventh day to the Israelites. This is stated in the fourth commandment, and also in Gen. 1, which was written for the Israelites; and the history of creation naturally and appropriately introduces the reason and the sanction of their day of rest.

Nor is there in the Old Testament a single trace of the observance of the sabbath before the time of Moses. After the Deluge, it is not mentioned in the covenant made with Noah. The first account of it occurs after the Israelites had left Egypt; and the fourth commandment consolidates it into a law, and explains the principle and sanctions of the institution.

The observance of one day in seven, therefore, is purely Jewish. The Jewish obligation to observe it rested on the enactment given by Moses.

The spirit of its observance, too, is Jewish, and not Christian. There is a difference between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. The spirit of Judaism is separation – that of Christianity is permeation. To separate the evil from the good was the aim and work of Judaism – to sever one nation from all other nations; certain meats from other meat; certain days from other days. Sanctify means to set apart. The very essence of the idea of Hebrew holiness lay in sanctification in the sense of separation.

On the contrary, Christianity is permeation – it permeates all evil with good – it aims at overcoming evil by good – it desires to transfuse the spirit of the day of rest into all other days, and to spread the holiness of one nation over all the world. To saturate life with God, and the world with heaven, that is the genius of Christianity.

Accordingly, the observance of the sabbath was entirely in the Jewish spirit. No fire was permitted to be made on pain of death (Exod. 35:3): No food was to be prepared (Exod. 16:5, 23): No buying nor selling: (Neh. 10:31): So rigorously was all this carried out, that a man gathering sticks was arraigned before the congregation, and sentenced to death by Moses.

This is Jewish, typical, shadowy – it is all to pass away. Much already has passed: even those who believe our Lord's day to be the descendant of the sabbath admit this. The day is changed. The first day of the week has taken the place of the seventh. The computation of hours is altered. The Jews reckoned from sunset to sunset – modern Christians reckon from midnight to midnight. The spirit of its observance, too, is altered. No one contends now for Jewish strictness in its details.

Now, observe, all this implies the abrogation of a great deal more – nay, of the whole Jewish sabbath itself. We have altered the day – the computation of the hours – the mode of observance: What remains to keep? Absolutely nothing of the literal portion except one day in seven: and that is abrogated, if the rest be abrogated. For by what right do we say that the order of the day, whether it be the first or the seventh, is a matter of indifference, because only formal, but that the proportion of days, one in seven, instead of one in eight or nine, is moral, and unalterable? On what intelligible principle do we produce the fourth commandment as binding upon Christians, and abrogate so important a clause of it as, “In it thou shalt do *no manner of work*”? On what self-evident ground is it shown that the Jew might not light a fire, but the Christian may; yet that if the postal arrangements of a country permit the delivery of a letter, it is an infraction of the sabbath?

Unquestionably on no scriptural authority. Let those who demand a strict observance of the letter of scripture remember that the Jewish sabbath is distinctly enforced in the Bible, and nowhere in the Bible repealed. You have changed the seventh day to the first on no clear scriptural permission. Two or three passages tell us that, after the

resurrection, the apostles were found together on the first day of the week (which, by the way, may have been Saturday evening after sunset). But it is concluded that therefore *probably* the change was apostolic. You have only a probability to go on—and that probability, except with the aid of tradition, infinitesimally small—for the abrogation of a single iota of the Jewish fourth commandment.

It will be said, however, that works of necessity and works of mercy are excepted by Christ's example.

Tell us, then, ye who are servants of the letter, and yet do not scruple to use a carriage to convey you to some church where a favourite minister is heard, is that a spiritual necessity or a spiritual luxury? Part of the Sunday meal of all of you is the result of a servant's work. Tell us, then, ye accurate logicians, who say that nothing escapes the rigour of the prohibition which is not necessary or merciful. Is a hot repast a work of necessity or a work of mercy? Oh! it rouses in every true soul a deep and earnest indignation to hear men who drive their cattle to church on Sundays, because they are too emasculated to trudge through cold and rain on foot, invoke the severity of an insulted Law of the Decalogue on those who provide facilities of movement for such as cannot afford the luxury of a carriage. What, think you, would He who blighted the Pharisees with such burning words, have said, had He been present by, while men, whose servants clean their houses, and prepare their meals, and harness their horses, stand up to denounce the service on some railway by which the poor are helped to health and enjoyment? Hired service for the rich is a necessity—hired service for the poor is a desecration of the sabbath! It is right that a thousand should toil for the few in private! It is past bearing in a Christian country that a few should toil for thousands on the sabbath-day!

There is only this alternative: if the fourth commandment be binding still, that clause is unrepealed—"no manner of work"; and so, too, is that other important part, the sanctification of the seventh day and not the first. If the fourth commandment be not binding in these points, then there is nothing left but the broad, comprehensive ground taken by the apostle. The whole sabbath is a shadow of things to come. In consistency, either hold that none of the formal part is abrogated, or else all. The whole of the letter of the commandment is moral, or else none.

II. There is, however, in the sabbath a substance, a permanent something—"a body"—which cannot pass away.

"The body is of Christ"; the spirit of Christ is the fulfilment of the law. To have the spirit of Christ is to have fulfilled the law. Let us hear the mind of Christ in this matter.

"The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." In that principle, rightly understood, lies the clue for the unravelling of the whole matter. The religionists of that day maintained that the neces-

sities of man's nature must give way to the rigour of the enactment; He taught that the enactment must yield to man's necessities. They said that the sabbath was written in the book of the Law; He said that it was written on man's nature, and that the law was merely meant to be in accordance with that nature. They based the obligation to observe the sabbath on the sacredness of an enactment; He on the sacredness of the nature of man.

An illustration will help us to perceive the difference between these two views. A wise physician prescribes a regimen of diet to a palate which has become diseased: he fixes what shall be eaten, the quantity, the hours, and number of times. On what does the obligation to obey rest? On the arbitrary authority of the physician? or on the nature with which that prescription is in accordance? When soundness and health are restored, the prescription falls into disuse: but the nature remains unalterable, which has made some things nutritious, others unwholesome, and excess for ever pernicious. Thus the spirit of the prescription may be still in force when the prescriptive authority is repealed.

So Moses prescribed the sabbath to a nation spiritually diseased. He drew the regimen of rest to men who did not feel the need of spiritual rest. He fenced round his rule with precise regulations of detail—one day in seven, no work, no fire, no traffic. On what does the obligation to obey it rest? On the authority of the rule? or on the necessities of that nature for which the rule was divinely adapted? Was man made for the sabbath, to obey it as a slave? or, Was the sabbath made for man? And when spiritual health has been restored, the Law regulating the details of rest may become obsolete; but the nature which demands rest can never be reversed.

Observe, now, that this is a far grander, safer, and more permanent basis on which to rest the sabbath than the mere enactment. For if you allege the fourth commandment as your authority, straightway you are met by the objection "no *manner* of work." Who gave you leave to alter that? And if you reply, works of necessity and works of mercy I may do, for Christ excepted these from the stringency of the rule, again the rejoinder comes, is there one in ten of the things that all Christians permit as lawful, really a matter of necessity?

Whereas, if the sabbath rest on the needs of human nature, and we accept His decision that the sabbath was made for *man*, then you have an eternal ground to rest on from which you cannot be shaken. A son of man may be lord of the sabbath-day, but he is not lord of his own nature. He cannot make one hair white or black. You may abrogate the formal Rule, but you cannot abrogate the needs of your own soul. Eternal as the constitution of the soul of man is the necessity for the existence of a day of rest. Further, still, on this ground alone can you find an impregnable defence of the *proportion*, one day in seven. On the other ground it is unsafe. Having altered the seventh to the first, I know not why one in seven might not be altered to one in ten. The

thing, however, has been tried; and by the necessities of human nature the change has been found pernicious. One day in ten, prescribed by revolutionary France, was actually pronounced by physiologists insufficient. So that we begin to find that, in a deeper sense than we at first suspected, "the sabbath was made for man." Even in the contrivance of one day in seven, it was arranged by unerring wisdom. Just because the sabbath was made for man, and not because man was ordained to keep the sabbath-day, you cannot tamper even with the iota, one day in seven.

That necessity on which the observance leans is the need of Rest. It is the deepest want in the soul of man. If you take off covering after covering of the nature which wraps him round, till you come to the central heart of hearts, deep lodged there you find the requirement of Repose. All men do not hanker after pleasure—all men do not crave intellectual food. But all men long for rest; the most restless that ever pursued a turbulent career on earth did by that career only testify to the need of the soul within. They craved for something which was not given: there was a thirst which was not slaked: that very restlessness betokened that—restless because not at rest. It is this need which sometimes makes the quiet of the grave an object of such deep desire. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest." It is this which creates the chief desirableness of Heaven: "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." And it is this which, consciously or unconsciously, is the real wish that lies at the bottom of all others.—Oh! for tranquillity of heart—Heaven's profound silence in the soul, "a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price!"

The rest needed by man is twofold. Physical repose of the body—a need which he shares with the animals, through the lower nature which he has in common with them. "Thou shalt do no work, nor thy cattle"—so far man's sabbath-need places him only on a level with the ox and with the ass.

But, besides this, the rest demanded is a repose of spirit. Between these two kinds of rest there is a very important difference. Bodily repose is simply inaction: the rest of the soul is exercise, not torpor. To do nothing is physical rest—to be engaged in full activity is the rest of the soul.

In that hour, which of all the twenty-four is most emblematic of heaven, and suggestive of repose, the eventide, in which instinctively Jacob went into the fields to meditate—when the work of the day is done, when the mind has ceased its tension, when the passions are lulled to rest in spite of themselves, by the spell of the quiet star-lit sky—it is then, amidst the silence of the lull of all the lower parts of our nature, that the soul comes forth to do its work. Then the peculiar, strange work of the soul, which the intellect cannot do—meditation, begins. Awe, and worship, and wonder are in full exercise; and Love

begins then in its purest form of mystic adoration and pervasive and undefined tenderness—separate from all that is coarse and earthly—swelling as if it would embrace the All in its desire to bless and lose itself in the sea of the love of God. This is the Rest of the soul—the *exercise* and play of all the nobler powers.

Two things are suggested by this thought.

First, the mode of the observance of the day of Rest. It has become lately a subject of very considerable attention. Physiologists have demonstrated the necessity of cessation from toil: they have urged the impossibility of perpetual occupation without end. Pictures, with much pathos in them, have been placed before us, describing the hard fate of those on whom no sabbath draws. It has been demanded as a right, entreated as a mercy, on behalf of the labouring man, that he should have one day in seven for recreation of his bodily energies. All well and true. But there is a great deal more than this. He who confines his conception of the need of rest to that, has left man on a level with the brutes. Let a man take merely lax and liberal notions of the fourth commandment—let him give his household and dependents immunity from toil, and wish for himself and them no more—he will find that there is a something wanting still. Experience tells us, after a trial, that those Sundays are the happiest, the purest, the most rich in blessing, in which the spiritual part has been most attended to—those in which the business letter was put aside till evening, and the profane literature not opened, and the ordinary occupations entirely suspended—those in which, as in the temple of Solomon, the sound of the earthly hammer has not been heard in the temple of the soul: for this is, in fact, the very distinction between the spirit of the Jewish sabbath and the spirit of the Christian Lord's day. The one is chiefly for the body—"Thou shalt do no manner of work." The other is principally for the soul—"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

The other truth suggested by that fact, that the repose of the soul is exercise, not rest, is, that it conveys an intimation of man's immortality. It is only when all the rest of our human nature is calmed that the spirit comes forth in full energy: all the rest tires, the spirit never tires. Humbleness, awe, adoration, love, these have in them no weariness; so that when this frame shall be dissolved into the dust of the earth, and the mind, which is merely fitted for this time world, learning by experience, shall have been superseded, then, in the opening out of an endless career of love, the spirit will enter upon that sabbath of which all earthly sabbaths are but the shadow, the sabbath of Eternity, the immortal Rest of its Father's Home.

Two observations in concluding.

1. When is a son of man lord of the sabbath-day? To whom may the sabbath safely become a shadow? I reply, he that has the mind of Christ may exercise discretionary lordship over the sabbath-day. He who is in possession of the substance may let the shadow go. A man in health has done with the prescriptions of the physician. But for an unspiritual

man to regulate his hours and amount of rest by his desires, is just as preposterous as for an unhealthy man to rule his appetites by his sensations. Win the mind of Christ—be like Him—and then, in the reality of Rest in God, the sabbath form of rest will be superseded. Remain apart from Christ, and then you are under the law again—the fourth commandment is as necessary for you as it was for the Israelite: the prescriptive regimen which may discipline your soul to a sounder state. It is at his peril that the worldly man departs from the *rule* of the day of rest. Nothing can make us free from the law but the Spirit.

2. The rule pronounced by the apostle is a rule of liberty, and at the same time a rule of charity: “Let no man judge you in respect of the sabbath-days.” It is very difficult to discuss this question of the sabbath. Heat, vehemence, acrimony, are substituted for argument. When you calmly ask to investigate the subject, men apply epithets, and call them reasons: they stigmatize you as a breaker of the sabbath, pronounce you “dangerous”; with sundry warnings against you in private, and pregnant hints in public.

The apostle urges charity: “One man esteemeth one day above another; another man esteemeth every day alike.” . . . “He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he regardeth it not.” Carry out that spirit. In the detail of this question there is abundant difficulty. It is a question of degree. Some work must be done on the sabbath-day: some must sacrifice their rest to the rest of others; for all human life is sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary.

Again, that which is rest to one man is not rest to another. To require the illiterate man to read his Bible for some hours would impose a toil upon him, though it might be a relaxation to you. To the labouring man a larger proportion of the day must be given to the recreation of his physical nature than is necessary for the man of leisure, to whom the spiritual observance of the day is easy, and seems all. Let us learn large, charitable considerateness. Let not the poor man sneer at his richer neighbour, if, in the exercise of his Christian liberty, he uses his horses to convey him to church and not to the mere drive of pleasure; but then, in fairness, let not the rich man be shocked and scandalized if the over-wearied shopkeeper and artisan breathe the fresh air of heaven with their families in the country. “The sabbath was made for man.” Be generous, consistent, large minded. A man may hold stiff, precise Jewish notions on this subject; but do not stigmatize that man as a formalist. Another may hold large, Paul-like views of the abrogation of the fourth commandment, and yet he may be sincerely and zealously anxious for the hallowing of the day in his household and through his country. Do not call that man a sabbath-breaker. They kept the law of the sabbath—they broke the law of love. Which was the worst to break? Which was the higher law to keep? Take care lest, in the zeal which seems to you to be for Christ, ye be found indulging their spirit, and not His.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT OF LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

THESE WORDS derive impressiveness from having been spoken immediately before the last Supper, and on the eve of the great Sacrifice: the commandment of Love issued appropriately at the time of the Feast of Love, and not long before the great Act of Love. For the love of Christ was no fine *saying*: it cost Him His life to say these words with meaning, “As I have loved you.”

There is a difficulty in the attempt to grasp the meaning of this command, arising from the fact that words change their meaning. Our Lord affixed a new significance to the word Love: it had been in use, of course, before, but the new sense in which He used it made it a new word.

His law is not adequately represented by the word Love: because love is, by conventional usage, appropriated to one species of human affection, which, in the commoner men, is the most selfish of all our feelings: and in the best is too exclusive and individual to represent that Charity which is universal.

Nor is Charity a perfect symbol of His meaning: for charity by use is identified with another form of love which is but a portion of it, almsgiving; and too saturated with that meaning to be entirely disengaged from it, even when we use it most accurately.

Benevolence or Philanthropy, in derivation, come nearer to the idea: but yet you feel at once that these words fall short: they are too tame and cool; too merely passive, as states of feeling rather than forms of life.

We have no sufficient word. There is therefore no help for it, but patiently to strive to master the meaning of this mighty word Love, in the only light that is left us, the light of the Saviour's life: “As I have loved you”: that alone expounds it. We will dispossess our minds of all preconceived notions; remove all low associations, all partial and conventional ones. If we would understand this law, it must be ever a “new” commandment, ever receiving fresh light and meaning from His life.

Take, I. The novelty of the law—“That ye love one another.”

II. The Spirit or measure of it—“As I have loved you.”

I. Its novelty. A "new commandment": yet that law was old. See 1 John 2:7-8.

1. It was new as a historical fact. We talk of the apostolic mission as a matter of course; we say that the apostles were ordered to go and plant churches, and so we dismiss the great fact. But we forget that the command was rather the result of a spirit working from within, than of an injunction working from without. That spirit was Love.

And when that new spirit was in the world, see how straightway it created a new thing. Men before that had travelled into foreign countries: the naturalist to collect specimens: the historian to accumulate facts: the philosopher to hive up wisdom, or else he had stayed in his cell or grove to paint *pictures* of beautiful love. But the spectacle of an Apostle Paul crossing oceans not to conquer kingdoms, not to hive up knowledge, but to impart life: not to accumulate stores for self, but to give, and to spend himself – was new in the history of the world. The celestial fire had touched the hearts of men, and their hearts flamed: and it caught, and spread, and would not stop. On they went, that glorious band of brothers, in their strange enterprise, over oceans, and through forests, penetrating into the dungeon and to the throne – to the hut of the savage feeding on human flesh, and to the shore lined with the skin-clad inhabitants of these far Isles of Britain. Read the account given by Tertullian of the marvellous rapidity with which the Christians increased and swarmed, and you are reminded of one of those vast armies of ants which moves across a country in irresistible myriads, drowned by thousands in rivers, cut off by fire, consumed by man and beast, and yet fresh hordes succeeding interminably to supply their place.

A new voice was heard: a new yearning upon earth; man pining at being severed from his brother, and longing to burst the false distinctions which had kept the best hearts from each other so long – an infant cry of life – the cry of the young Church of God. And all this from Judea – the narrowest, most bigoted, most intolerant nation on the face of the earth.

Now I say that this was historically a new thing.

2. It was new in extent. It was, in literal words, an old commandment given before both to Jew and Gentile. To the Jew as for instance in Leviticus 19:18. To the Gentile, in the recognition which was so often made of the beauty of the law in its partial application, as in the case of friendship, patriotism, domestic attachment, and so on.

But the difference lay in the extent in which these words "one another" were understood. By them, or rather by "neighbour," the Jew meant his countryman; and narrowed that down again to his friends among his countrymen – so that the well-known Rabbinical gloss upon these words, current in the days of Christ, was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." And what the Gentile understood by the extent of the law of love, we may learn from the well-known

words of their best and wisest, who thanked heaven that he was born a man, and not a brute—a Greek, and not a barbarian: as if to be a barbarian were identical with being a brute.

Now, listen to Christ's exposition of the word neighbour. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies." And He went further—as a specimen of a neighbour He specially selected one of that nation whom, as a theologian and a patriot, every Jew had been taught to hate. And just as the application of electricity to the innumerable wants of human life and to new ends, is reckoned a new discovery and invention of modern times (though the fact has been familiar for ages to the Indian child in the forest of the far west, and applied by him for ages to his childish sports), so the extension of this grand principle of love to all the possible cases of life, and to all possible persons—even though the principle was known and applied long before, in love to friends, country, and relations—is truly and properly a new commandment, a discovery, a gospel, a revelation.

3. It was new in being made the central principle of a system. Never had obedience before been trusted to a principle: it had always been hedged round by a law. The religion of Christ is not a law, but a spirit—not a creed, but a life. To the one motive of Love, God has intrusted the whole work of winning the souls of His redeemed. The heart of man was made for love: pants and pines for it—only in the love of Christ, and not in restrictions, can his soul expand. Now it was reserved for One to pierce, with the glance of intuition, down into the springs of human action, and to proclaim the simplicity of its machinery. "Love," said the apostle after Him—"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

We are told that in the new commandment the old perishes: that under the law of love, man is free from the law of works. Let us see how.

Take any commandment—*e.g.* the sixth, the seventh, the eighth. I may abstain from murder and theft, deterred by law: because law has annexed to them certain penalties. But I may also rise into the spirit of Charity: then I am free from the law, the law was not made for a righteous man: the law no more binds or restrains me, now that I love my neighbour, than the dyke built to keep in the sea at high tide restrains it when that sea has sunk to low watermark.

Or the seventh. You may keep that law from dread of discovery—or you may learn a higher Love: and then you *cannot* injure a human soul: you cannot degrade a human spirit. Charity has made the old commandment superfluous. In the strong language of St. John, you *cannot* sin because you are born of God.

It was the proclamation of this, the great living principle of human obedience, not with the pedantry of a philosopher, nor the exaggeration of an orator, but in the simple reality of life, which made this commandment of Christ a new commandment.

II. The spirit or measure of the law—"as I have loved you."

Broadly, the love of Christ was the spirit of giving all He had to give. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Christ's love was not a sentiment; it was a self-giving. To that His adversaries bore testimony—"He saved others; Himself He cannot save." Often as we have read these words, did it ever strike us, and if not, does it not bring a flash of surprise when we perceive it, that these words, meant as taunt, were really the noblest panegyric, a testimony higher and more adequate far than even that of the centurion? "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The first clause contained the answer to the second—"Himself He cannot save!" How could He, having saved others? How can any keep what he gives? How can any live for self, when he is living for others? Unconsciously, those enemies were enunciating the very principle of Christianity, the grand law of all existence, that only by losing self you can save others; that only by giving life you can bless. Love gives itself. The mother spends herself in giving life to her child; the soldier dies for his country; nay, even the artist produces nothing destined for immortality, nothing that will *live*, except so far as he has forgotten himself, and merged his very being in his work.

"He saved others; Himself He cannot save." That was the love of Christ. Now to descend to particulars.

That spirit of self-giving manifests itself in the shape of considerate kindness. Take three cases—First, that in which He fed the people with bread. "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat." There was a tenderness which, not absorbed in His own great designs, considered a number of small particulars of their state, imagined, provided; and this for the satisfaction of the lowest wants. Again, to the disciples: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." He would not overwork them in the sublimest service. He did not grudge from duty their interval of relaxation; He even tenderly enforced it. Lastly, His dying words: "Behold thy mother! Woman, behold thy son!" Short sentences. He was too exhausted to say more. But in that hour of death-torture, He could think of her desolate state when He was gone, and with delicate, thoughtful attention provide for her well-being.

There are people who would do great acts; but because they wait for great opportunities, life passes, and the acts of love are not done at all. Observe, this considerateness of Christ was shown in little things. And such are the parts of human life. Opportunities for doing greatly seldom occur—life is made up of infinitesimals. If you compute the sum of happiness in any given day, you will find that it was composed of small attentions—kind looks, which made the heart swell, and stirred into health that sour, rancid film of misanthropy which is apt to coagulate on the stream of our inward life, as surely as we live in heart apart from our fellow-creatures.

Doubtless, the memory of each one of us will furnish him with the

picture of some member of a family whose very presence seemed to shed happiness: A daughter, perhaps, whose light step even in the distance irradiated every one's countenance. What was the secret of such an one's power? what had she done? Absolutely nothing; but radiant smiles, beaming good humour, the tact of divining what every one felt, and every one wanted, told that she had got out of self and learned to think for others; so that at one time it showed itself in deprecating the quarrel, which lowering brows and raised tones already showed to be impending, by sweet words; at another, by smoothing an invalid's pillow; at another, by soothing a sobbing child; at another, by humouring and softening a father who had returned weary and ill-tempered from the irritating cares of business. None but she saw those things. None but a loving heart *could* see them.

That was the secret of her heavenly power. Call you those things homely trifles, too homely for a sermon? By reference to the character of Christ, they rise into something quite sublime. For that is loving as He loved. And remark, too, these trifles prepared for larger deeds. The one who will be found in trial capable of great acts of love, is ever the one who is always doing considerate small ones. The Soul which poured itself out to death upon the cross for the human race, was the spirit of Him who thought of the wants of the people, contrived for the rest of the disciples, and was thoughtful for a mother.

Once again—it was a love never foiled by the unworthiness of those on whom it had been once bestowed. It was a love which faults, desertion, denial, unfaithfulness, could not chill, even though they wrung His heart. He had chosen: and He trusted. Even in ordinary manhood, that is a finely-tempered heart, one of no ordinary mould, which can say, "It ever was my way, and shall be still, when I do trust a man to trust him wholly."

And yet there was everything to shake His trust in humanity. The Pharisees called Him Good Master, and were circumventing Him all the while. The people shouted hosannas, and three days afterwards were shrieking for His blood. One disciple who had dipped in the same dish, and been trusted with His inmost counsels, deceived and betrayed Him; another was ashamed of Him; three fell asleep while He was preparing for death; all forsook Him. Yet nothing is more surprising than that unshaken, I had well-nigh said, *obstinate*, trust with which He clung to His hopes of our Nature, and believed in the face of demonstration.

As we mix in life, there comes, especially to sensitive natures, a temptation to distrust. In young life, we throw ourselves with unbounded and glorious confidence on such as we think well of—an error soon corrected: for we soon find out, too soon! that men and women are not what they seem. Then comes disappointment; and the danger is a reaction of desolating and universal mistrust. For if we look on the doings of man with a merely worldly eye, and pierce below the sur-

face of character, we are apt to feel bitter scorn and disgust for our fellow-creatures. We have lived to see human hollowness: the ashes of the Dead Sea shore; the falseness of what seemed so fair; the mouldering beneath the whited sepulchre: and no wonder if we are tempted to think "friendship *all* a cheat—smiles hypocrisy—words deceit"; and they who are what is called *knowing* in life contract by degrees, as the result of their experience, a hollow distrust of men, and learn to sneer at apparently good motives. That demoniacal sneer which we have seen, ay perhaps felt, curling the lip at times, "Doth Job serve God for nought?"

The only preservative from this withering of the heart is Love. Love is its own perennial fount of strength. The strength of affection is a proof not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater mind cleaves to the smaller with more force than the other to it. A parent loves the child more than the child the parent; and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because His heart was infinitely larger. Love trusts on—ever hopes and expects better things, and this, a trust springing from itself and out of its own deeps alone.

And more than this. It is this *trusting* love that makes men what they are trusted to be, so realizing itself. Would you make men *trust-worthy*? Trust them. Would you make them true? Believe them. This was the real force of that sublime battle-cry which no Englishman hears without emotion. When the crews of the fleet of Britain knew that they were *expected* to do their duty, they *did* their duty. They felt in that spirit-stirring sentence that they were trusted: and the simultaneous cheer that rose from every ship was a forerunner of victory—the battle was half-won already. They went to serve a country which expected from them great things: and they did great things. Those pregnant words raised an enthusiasm for the chieftain who had thrown himself upon his men in trust, which a double line of hostile ships could not appal, nor decks drenched in blood extinguish.

And it is on this principle that Christ wins the hearts of His redeemed. He trusted the doubting Thomas; and Thomas arose with a faith worthy "of his Lord and his God." He would not suffer even the lie of Peter to shake His conviction that Peter might love Him yet; and Peter answered nobly to that sublime forgiveness. His last prayer was in extenuation and hope for the race who had rejected Him—and the kingdoms of the world are become His own. He has loved us, God knows why: I do not; and we, all unworthy though we be, respond faintly to that love, and try to be what He would have us.

Therefore, come what may, hold fast to love. Though men should

rend your heart, let them not embitter or harden it. We win by tenderness: we conquer by forgiveness. Oh, strive to enter into something of that large celestial Charity which is meek, enduring, unretaliating, and which even the overbearing world cannot withstand forever. Learn the new commandment of the Son of God. Not to love, but to love as He loved. Go forth in this spirit to your life-duties: go forth, children of the cross, to carry everything before you, and win victories for God by the conquering power of a love like His.

INSPIRATION

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:1-4).

WE WILL ENDEAVOUR, brethren, to search the connection between the different parts of these verses.

First, the apostle lays down a Christian's duty — "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." After that he brings forward as the sanction of that duty, the spirit of the Life of Christ — "For even Christ pleased not Himself." Next, he adds an illustration of that principle by a quotation from Psalm 69: — "It is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on Me." Lastly, he explains and defends that application of the psalm, as if he had said, "I am perfectly justified in applying that passage to Christ, for 'whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.'"

So that in this quotation, and the defence of it as contained in these verses, we have the principle of Apostolical interpretation; we have

the principle upon which the apostles used the Old Testament Scriptures, and we are enabled to understand their view of inspiration. This is one of the most important considerations upon which we can be at this moment engaged. It is the deepest question of our day; the one which lies beneath all others, and in comparison of which the questions just now agitating the popular mind—whether of Papal jurisdiction or varieties of Church doctrine in our own communion—are but superficial: it is this grand question of Inspiration which is given to this age to solve.

Our subject will break itself up into questions such as these—What the Bible is, and what the Bible is not? What is meant by inspiration? Whether inspiration is the same thing as infallibility? When God inspired the minds, did He dictate the words? Does the inspiration of men mean the infallibility of their words? Is inspiration the same as dictation? Whether, granting that we have the Word of God, we have also the words of God? Are the operations of the Holy Spirit inspiring men, compatible with partial error, as His operations in sanctifying them are compatible with partial evil? How are we to interpret and apply the Scriptures? Is Scripture, as the Romanists say, so unintelligible and obscure that we cannot understand it without having the guidance of an infallible Church? Or is it, as some fanciful Protestants will tell us, a book upon which all ingenuity may be used to find Christ in every sentence? Upon these things there are many views, some of them false, some superstitious; but it is not our business now to deal with these; our way is rather to teach positively than negatively: we will try to set up the truth, and error may fall before it.

The Collect for this day leads us to the special consideration of Holy Scripture; we shall therefore take this for our subject, and endeavour to understand what was the Apostolical principle of Interpretation.

In the text we find two principles: first, that Scripture is of universal application;

And second, that all the lines of Scripture converge towards Jesus Christ.

First, then, there is here an universal application of Scripture. This passage quoted by the apostle is from the sixty-ninth Psalm. That was evidently spoken by David of himself. From first to last, no unprejudiced mind can detect a conception in the writer's mind of an application to Christ, or to any other person after him; the psalmist is there full of himself and his own sorrows. It is a natural and touching exposition of human grief and a good man's trust. Nevertheless, you will observe that St. Paul extends the use of these words, and applies them to Jesus Christ. Nay, more than that, he uses them as belonging to all Christians; for, he says, "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." Now this principle will be more evident if we state it in the words of Scripture, "Knowing that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation": those holy men spake

not their own limited individual feelings, but as feeling that they were inspired by the Spirit of God. Their words belonged to the whole of our common Humanity. No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. Bear in mind that the word prophecy does not mean what we now understand by it – merely prediction of future events – in the Scriptures it signifies inspired teaching. The teaching of the prophets was by no means always prediction. Bearing this in mind, let us remember that the apostle says it is of no private interpretation. Had the Psalm applied only to David, then it would have been of private interpretation – it would have been special, limited, particular; it would have belonged to an individual; instead of which, it belongs to Humanity. Take again the subject of which we spoke last Sunday – the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. Manifestly that was spoken originally at Jerusalem; in a manner it seemed limited to Jerusalem, for its very name was mentioned; and besides, as we read this morning, our Saviour says, “This generation shall not pass until all be fulfilled.”

But had the prophecy ended there, then you would still have had prophecy, but it would have been of private – that is, peculiar, limited – interpretation; whereas our Redeemer’s principle was this: that this doom pronounced on Jerusalem was universally applicable, that it was but a style and specimen of God’s judgments. The judgment coming of the Son of Man takes place wherever there is evil grown ripe, whenever corruption is complete. And the gathering of the Roman eagles is but a specimen of the way in which judgment at last overtakes every city, every country, and every man in whom evil has reached the point where there is no possibility of cure.

So that the prophecy belongs to all ages, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world. The words of St. Matthew are universally applicable. For Scripture deals with principles; not with individuals, but rather with states of humanity. Promises and threatenings are made to individuals, because they are in a particular state of character; but they belong to all who are in that state, for “God is no respecter of persons.”

First, we will take an instance of the state of blessing.

There was blessing pronounced to Abraham, in which it will be seen how large a grasp on Humanity this view of Scripture gave to St. Paul. The whole argument in the Epistle to the Romans is, that the promises made to Abraham were not to his person, but to his faith; and thus the apostle says, “They who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

We will now take the case of curse or threatening. Jonah, by Divine command, went through Nineveh, proclaiming its destruction; but that prophecy belonged to the state in which Nineveh was; it was true only while it remained in that state; and therefore, as they repented, and their state was thus changed, the prophecy was left un-

fulfilled. From this we perceive the largeness and grandeur of Scripture interpretation. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, we find the apostle telling of the state of the Jews in their passage towards the Promised Land, their state of idolatry and gluttony, and then he proceeds to pronounce the judgments that fell upon them, adding that he tells us this not merely as a matter of history, but rather as an illustration of a principle. They are specimens of eternal, unalterable Law. So that whosoever shall be in the state of these Jews, whosoever shall imitate them, the same judgments must fall upon them, the same satiety and weariness, the same creeping of the inward serpent polluting all their feelings; and therefore he says, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples." Again he uses the same principle, not as a private, but a general application; for, he says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man."

We will take now another case, applied not to nations, but to individuals. In Hebrews 13, we find these words from the Old Testament, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"; and there the apostle's inference is that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what men shall do unto me." Now, when we refer to Scripture, we shall find that this was a promise originally made to Jacob. The apostle does not hesitate to take that promise and appropriate it to all Christians; for it was made, not to Jacob as a person, but to the state in which Jacob was; it was made to all who, like Jacob, are wanderers and pilgrims in the world; it was made to all whom sin has rendered outcasts and who are longing to return. The promises made to the meek belong to Meekness; the promises made to the humble belong to Humility.

And this it is which makes this Bible, not only a blessed Book, but *our* Book. It is this universal applicability of Scripture which has made the influence of the Bible universal: this Book has held spell-bound the hearts of nations, in a way in which no single book has ever held men before. Remember too, in order to enhance the marvellousness of this, that the nation from which it emanated was a despised people. For the last eighteen hundred years the Jews have been proverbially a by-word and a reproach. But that contempt for Israel is nothing new to the world, for before even the Roman despised them, the Assyrian and Egyptian regarded them with scorn. Yet the words which came from Israel's prophets have been the life-blood of the world's devotions. And the teachers, the psalmists, the prophets, and the lawgivers of this despised nation spoke out truths that have struck the key-note of the heart of man; and this, not because they were of Jewish, but just because they were of universal application.

This collection of books has been to the world what no other book has ever been to a nation. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a compact based on it. Men hold the Bible in their hands when they prepare to give solemn evidence affecting life, death, or

property; the sick man is almost afraid to die unless the Book be within reach of his hands; the battle-ship goes into action with one on board whose office is to expound it; its prayers, its psalms are the language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language. If ever there has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a nation, you are sure to find its basis in the Bible. There is no new religious idea given to the world, but it is merely the development of something given in the Bible. The very translation of it has fixed language and settled the idioms of speech. Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated. It has made the most illiterate peasant more familiar with the history, customs, and geography of ancient Palestine than with the localities of his own country. Men who know nothing of the Grampians, of Snowdon, or of Skiddaw, are at home in Zion, the lake of Gennesareth, or among the rills of Carmel. People who know little about London, know by heart the places in Jerusalem where those blessed feet trod which were nailed to the Cross. Men who know nothing of the architecture of a Christian cathedral can yet tell you all about the pattern of the Holy Temple. Even this shows us the influence of the Bible. The orator holds a thousand men for half an hour breathless—a thousand men as one, listening to his single word. But this Word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years spell-bound; held them by an abiding power, even the universality of its truth; and we feel it to be no more a collection of books, but *the Book*.

We pass on now to consider the second principle contained in these words, which is, that all Scripture bears towards Jesus Christ. St. Paul quotes these Jewish words as fulfilled in Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is the central point in which all the converging lines of Scripture meet. Again we state this principle in Scripture language: in the book of Revelation we find it written, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," that is, the sum and substance of prophecy; the very spirit of Scripture is to bear testimony to Jesus Christ. We must often have been surprised and perplexed at the way in which the Apostles quote passages in reference to Christ, which originally had no reference to Him. In our text, for instance, David speaks only of himself, and yet St. Paul refers it to Christ. Let us understand this. We have already said that Scripture deals not with individuals, but with states and principles. Promises belong to persons only so far as they are what they are taken to be; and consequently all unlimited promises made to individuals so far as they are referred merely to those individuals, are necessarily exaggerated and hyperbolical. They can only be true of One in whom that is fulfilled which was unfulfilled in them.

We will take an instance. We are all familiar with the well-known prophecy of Balaam. We all remember the magnificent destinies he promised to the people whom he was called to curse. Those promises

have never been fulfilled, neither from the whole appearance of things does it seem likely that they ever will be fulfilled in their literal sense. To whom, then, are they made? To Israel? Yes; so far as they developed God's own conception. Balaam says, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Is this the character of Israel, an idolatrous and rebellious nation? Spoken of the literal Israel, this prophecy is false; but it was not false of that spotlessness and purity of which Israel was the temporal and imperfect type. If one can be found of whom that description is true, of whom we can say the Lord hath not beheld iniquity in him, to him then that prophecy belongs.

Brethren—Jesus of Nazareth is that pure and spotless One. Christ is perfectly, all that every saint was partially. To Him belongs all: all that description of a perfect character, which would be exaggeration if spoken of others, and to this character the blessing belongs; hence it is that all the fragmentary representations of character collect and centre in Him alone. Therefore, the apostle says, "It was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Consequently St. Paul would not read the Psalm as spoken only of David. Were the lofty aspirations, the purity and humbleness expressed in the text true of him, poor, sinful, erring David? These were the expressions of the Christ within his heart—the longing of the Spirit of God within him; but they were no proper representation of the spirit of his life, for there is a marvellous difference between a man's ideal and his actual—between the man and the book he writes—a difference between the aspirations within the man and the character which is realized by his daily life. The promises are to the Christ within David; therefore they are applied to the Christ when He comes. Now, let us extract from that this application.

Brethren, Scripture is full of Christ. From Genesis to Revelation everything breathes of Him, not every letter of every sentence, but the spirit of every chapter. It is full of Christ, but not in the way that some suppose; for there is nothing more miserable, as specimens of perverted ingenuity, than the attempts of certain commentators and preachers to find remote, and recondite, and intended allusions to Christ everywhere. For example, they chance to find in the construction of the temple the fusion of two metals, and this they conceive is meant to show the union of Divinity with Humanity in Christ. If they read of coverings to the tabernacle, they find implied the doctrine of imputed righteousness. If it chance that one of the curtains of the tabernacle be red, they see in that a prophecy of the blood of Christ. If they are told that the Kingdom of Heaven is a pearl of great price, they will see in it the allusion—that, as a pearl is the production of animal suffering, so the Kingdom of Heaven is produced by the sufferings of the Redeemer. I mention this perverted mode of comment, because it is not merely harmless, idle, and useless; it is positively dangerous.

This is to make the Holy Spirit speak riddles and conundrums, and the interpretation of Scripture but clever riddle-guessing. Putting aside all this childishness, we say that the Bible is full of Christ. Every unfulfilled aspiration of Humanity in the past; all partial representation of perfect character; all sacrifices, nay even those of idolatry, point to the fulfilment of what we want, the answer to every longing—the type of perfect Humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Get the habit—a glorious one—of referring all to Christ. How did He feel?—think?—act? So then must I feel, and think, and act. Observe how Christ was a living reality in St. Paul's mind. "Should I please myself?" "For even Christ pleased not Himself." "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

THE POWER OF SORROW

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:9–10).

THAT WHICH IS CHIEFLY INSISTED ON in this verse, is the distinction between sorrow and repentance. To grieve over sin is one thing, to repent of it is another.

The apostle rejoiced, not that the Corinthians sorrowed, but that they sorrowed unto repentance. Sorrow has two results; it may end in spiritual life, or in spiritual death; and, in themselves, one of these is as natural as the other. Sorrow may produce two kinds of reformation—a transient, or a permanent one—an alteration in habits, which, originating in emotion, will last so long as that emotion continues, and then, after a few fruitless efforts, be given up—a repent-

ance which will be repented of; or, again, a permanent change, which will be reversed by no after thought—a repentance not to be repented of. Sorrow is, in itself, therefore, a thing neither good nor bad; its value depends on the spirit of the person on whom it falls. Fire will inflame straw, soften iron, or harden clay; its effects are determined by the object with which it comes in contact. Warmth develops the energies of life, or helps the progress of decay. It is a great power in the hot-house, a great power also in the coffin; it expands the leaf, matures the fruits, adds precocious vigour to vegetable life, and warmth too; develops, with tenfold rapidity, the weltering process of dissolution. So too with sorrow. There are spirits in which it develops the seminal principle of life; there are others in which it prematurely hastens the consummation of irreparable decay. Our subject therefore is the twofold power of sorrow.

I. The fatal power of the sorrow of the world.

II. The life-giving power of the sorrow that is after God.

The simplest way in which the sorrow of the world works death, is seen in the effect of mere regret for worldly loss. There are certain advantages with which we come into the world. Youth, health, friends, and sometimes property. So long as these are continued we are happy; and, because happy, fancy ourselves very grateful to God. We bask in the sunshine of his gifts, and this pleasant sensation of sunning ourselves in life we call religion; that state in which we all are before sorrow comes, to test the temper of the metal of which our souls are made, when the spirits are unbroken and the heart buoyant, when a fresh morning is to a young heart what it is to the skylark. The exuberant burst of joy seems a spontaneous hymn to the Father of all blessing, like the matin carol of the bird; but this is not religion: it is the instinctive utterance of happy feeling, having as little of moral character in it, in the happy human being, as in the happy bird.

Nay more—the religion which is only sunned into being by happiness, is a suspicious thing: having been warmed by joy, it will become cold when joy is over; and then, when these blessings are removed, we count ourselves hardly treated, as if we had been defrauded of a right; rebellious, hard feelings come; then it is you see people become bitter, spiteful, discontented. At every step in the solemn path of life, something must be mourned which will come back no more; the temper that was so smooth becomes rugged and uneven; the benevolence that expanded upon all, narrows into an ever dwindling selfishness—we are alone; and then that death-like loneliness deepens as life goes on. The course of man is downwards, and he moves with slow and ever more solitary steps, down to the dark silence—the silence of the grave. This is the death of heart; the sorrow of the world has worked death.

Again, there is a sorrow of the world, when sin is grieved for in a worldly spirit. There are two views of sin: in one it is looked upon as wrong—in the other, as producing loss—loss, for example, of character. In such cases, if character could be preserved before the world, grief would not come; but the paroxysms of misery fall upon our proud spirit when our guilt is made public. The most distinct instance we have of this is in the life of Saul. In the midst of his apparent grief, the thing still uppermost was that he had forfeited his kingly character: almost the only longing was, that Samuel should honour him before his people. And hence it comes to pass, that often remorse and anguish only begin with exposure. Suicide takes place, not when the act of wrong is done, but when the guilt is known, and hence, too many a one becomes hardened who would otherwise have remained tolerably happy; in consequence of which we blame the exposure, not the guilt; we say, if it had been hushed up, all would have been well; that the servant who robbed his master was ruined by taking away his character; and that if the sin had been passed over, repentance might have taken place, and he might have remained a respectable member of society. Do not think so. It is quite true that remorse was produced by exposure, and that the remorse was fatal; the sorrow which worked death arose from that exposure, and so far exposure may be called the cause: had it never taken place, respectability, and comparative peace, might have continued; but outward respectability is not change of heart.

It is well known that the corpse has been preserved for centuries in the iceberg, or in antiseptic peat; and that when atmospheric air was introduced to the exposed surface, it crumbled into dust. Exposure worked dissolution, but it only manifested the death which was already there; so with sorrow, it is not the living heart which drops to pieces, or crumbles into dust, when it is revealed. Exposure did not work death in the Corinthian sinner, but life.

There is another form of grief for sin, which the apostle would not have rejoiced to see; it is when the hot tears come from pride. No two tones of feeling, apparently similar, are more unlike than that in which Saul exclaimed, "I have played the fool exceedingly," and that in which the Publican cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The charge of folly brought against oneself only proves that we feel bitterly for having lost our own self-respect. It is a humiliation to have forfeited the idea which a man had formed of his own character—to find that the very excellence on which he prided himself, is the one in which he has failed. If there were a virtue for which Saul was conspicuous, it was generosity; yet it was exactly in this point of generosity in which he discovered himself to have failed, when he was overtaken on the mountain, and his life spared by the very man whom he was hunting to the death, with feelings of the meanest jealousy. Yet there was no real repentance there; there was none of that in which

a man is sick of state and pomp. Saul could still rejoice in regal splendour, go about complaining of himself to the Ziphites, as if he was the most ill-treated and friendless of mankind; he was still jealous of his reputation, and anxious to be well thought of. Quite different is the tone in which the Publican, who felt himself a sinner, asked for mercy. He heard the contumelious expression of the Pharisee, "this Publican." With no resentment, he meekly bore it as a matter naturally to be taken for granted—"he did not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven"; he was as a worm which turns in agony, but not revenge, upon the foot which treads it into the dust.

Now this sorrow of Saul's, too, works death: no merit can restore self-respect; when once a man has found himself out, he cannot be deceived again. The heart is as a stone: a speck of canker corrodes and spreads within. What on this earth remains, but endless sorrow, for him who has ceased to respect himself, and has no God to turn to?

II. The divine power of sorrow.

1. It works repentance. By repentance is meant, in Scripture, change of life, alteration of habits, renewal of heart. This is the aim and meaning of all sorrow. The consequences of sin are meant to wean from sin. The penalty annexed to it is, in the first instance, corrective, not penal. Fire burns the child, to teach it one of the truths of this universe—the property of fire to burn. The first time it cuts its hand with a sharp knife, it has gained a lesson which it never will forget. Now, in the case of pain, this experience is seldom, if ever, in vain. There is little chance of a child forgetting that fire will burn, and that sharp steel will cut; but the moral lessons contained in the penalties annexed to wrong-doing are just as truly intended, though they are by no means so unerring in enforcing their application. The fever in the veins and the headache which succeed intoxication, are meant to warn against excess. On the first occasion they are simply corrective; in every succeeding one they assume more and more a penal character in proportion as the conscience carries with them the sense of ill desert.

Sorrow, then, has done its work when it deters from evil; in other words, when it works repentance. In the sorrow of the world, the obliquity of the heart towards evil is not cured; it seems as if nothing cured it; heartache and trials come in vain; the history of life at last is what it was at first. The man is found erring where he erred before. The same course, begun with the certainty of the same desperate end which has taken place so often before.

They have reaped the whirlwind, but they will again sow the wind. Hence, I believe, that life-giving sorrow is less remorse for that which is irreparable, than anxiety to save that which remains. The sorrow that ends in death hangs in funeral weeds over the sepulchres of the past. Yet the present does not become more wise. Not one resolution is

made more firm, nor one habit more holy. Grief is all. Whereas sorrow avails *only* when the past is converted into experience, and from failure lessons are learned which never are to be forgotten.

2. Permanence of alteration; for after all, a steady reformation is a more decisive test of the value of mourning than depth of grief.

The susceptibility of emotion varies with individuals. Some men feel intensely, others suffer less keenly; but this is constitutional, belonging to nervous temperament, rather than moral character. *This* is the characteristic of the divine sorrow, that it is a repentance "not repented of"; no transient, short-lived resolutions, but sustained resolve.

And the beautiful law is, that in proportion as the repentance increases the grief diminishes. "I rejoice," says Paul, that "I made you sorry, though it were *but for a time*." Grief for a time, repentance for ever. And few things more signally prove the wisdom of this apostle than his way of dealing with this grief of the Corinthian. He tried no artificial means of intensifying it—did not urge the duty of dwelling upon it, magnifying it, nor even of gauging and examining it. So soon as grief had done its work, the apostle was anxious to dry useless tears—he even feared lest haply such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

"A true penitent," says Mr. Newman, "never forgives himself." O false estimate of the gospel of Christ, and of the heart of man! A proud remorse does not forgive itself the forfeiture of its own dignity; but it is the very beauty of the penitence which is according to God, that at last the sinner, realizing God's forgiveness, does learn to forgive himself. For what other purpose did St. Paul command the Church of Corinth to give ecclesiastical absolution, but in order to afford a symbol and assurance of the Divine pardon, in which the guilty man's grief should not be overwhelming, but that he should become reconciled to himself? What is meant by the Publican's going *down to his house* justified, but that he felt at peace with himself and God?

3. It is sorrow with God—here called godly sorrow; in the margin, sorrowing according to God.

God sees sin not in its consequences but in itself; a thing infinitely evil, even if the consequences were happiness to the guilty instead of misery. So sorrow according to God, is to see sin as God sees it. The grief of Peter was as bitter as that of Judas. He went out and wept bitterly; how bitterly none can tell but they who have learned to look on sin as God does. But in Peter's grief there was an element of hope; and that sprung precisely from this—that he saw God in it all. Despair of self did not lead to despair of God.

This is the great, peculiar feature of this sorrow: God is there, accordingly self is less prominent. It is not a microscopic self-examination, nor a mourning in which self is ever uppermost: *my* character

gone; the greatness of *my* sin; the forfeiture of *my* salvation. The thought of God absorbs all that. I believe the feeling of true penitence would express itself in such words as these:—There *is* a righteousness, though I have not attained it. There is a purity, and a love, and a beauty, though my life exhibits little of it. In that I can rejoice. Of that I can feel the surpassing loveliness. My doings? They are worthless, I cannot endure to think of them. I am not thinking of them, I have something else to think of. There, there; in that Life I see it. And so the Christian—gazing not on what he is, but on what he desires to be—dares in penitence to say, That Righteousness is mine: dares, even when the recollection of his sin is most vivid and most poignant, to say with Peter, thinking less of himself than of God, and sorrowing as it were with God—“Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

THE ORPHANAGE OF MOSES

(A Sermon Preached on behalf of the Orphan Society)

“And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews’ children.—Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?—And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child’s mother.—And Pharaoh’s daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it” (Exodus 2:6-9).

THIS IS THE ACCOUNT given of the discovery of a foundling orphan. Moses was an orphan—bereaved; ordinarily it means one bereaved by death. But it matters not whether it is by death or otherwise; it is truly an orphan if it be in any manner deprived of a parent’s care.

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Here the child Moses was not bereaved by death; but by political circumstances.

In the book from whence our text is taken, we are told that three laws were enacted against the liberties of Israel: —

1. To keep down the population, the political economy of those days devised, as a preventive check, the slaughter of the males.

2. To prevent their acquiring any political importance, the officers set over them were Egyptians. No Israelite was eligible to any office — not even as a taskmaster.

3. To prevent their acquiring knowledge, they were prohibited from the slightest leisure: their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, in brick and mortar.

No penal statutes were ever more complete than these. If any penal statutes could have prevented the growth of this injured nation, these must have succeeded. Numerically limited, rendered politically insignificant, and intellectually feeble, the slavery of Israel was complete.

But wherever governments enact penal laws which are against the Laws of God, those governments or nations are, by the sure and inevitable process of revolution, preparing for themselves destruction. As when you compress yielding water, it bursts at last.

Pharaoh's laws were against all the laws of Nature, or, more properly speaking, against the Laws of God: and Nature was slowly working against Pharaoh. He had made God his enemy.

Against these laws of Pharaoh a mother's heart revolted. She hid her child for three months. Disobedience to this Egyptian law, we read, was faith in God — so says the Epistle to the Hebrews. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

At last concealment was no longer possible, and the mother placed her child in an ark among the reeds of the river Nile. And there a foundling orphan he lay, who was to be the future emancipator and lawgiver of Israel.

In order to understand these verses, I divide them into two branches: —

- I. The claims of the orphan.
- II. The orphan's education.

And first. By apparent accident, if there be such a thing in this world of God's, the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river to wash, and, among the reeds, she saw the chest, in which lay the child.

Now the first claim put forward on her compassion was the claim of infancy.

The chest was opened. The princess "saw the child." That single sentence contains an argument. It was an appeal to the woman's heart. It mattered not that she was a princess, nor that she belonged to the proudest class of the most exclusive nation in the world. Rank, caste, nationality, all melted before the great fact of womanhood. She was a woman, and before her lay an outcast child.

Now, let us observe, that feeling which arose here was spontaneous. She did not feel compassion because it was her duty so to feel, but because it was her nature. The law of Egypt forbade her to feel so for a Hebrew child.

We commit a capital error when we make feeling a matter of command. To make feelings a subject of law destroys their beauty and spontaneity.

When we say ought—that a woman ought to feel so and so—we state a fact, not a command. We say that it is her nature, and that she is unnatural if she does not. There is something wrong—her nature is perverted. But no command can *make* her feel thus or thus. Law, applied to feeling, only make hypocrites.

God has provided for Humanity by a plan more infallible than system, by implanting feeling in our natures. It was a heathen felt thus.

Do not fancy that Christianity created these feelings of tenderness and compassion by commanding them. Christianity declares them, commands them, and sanctions them, because they belong to man's unadulterated nature. Christianity acknowledges them, stamps them with the divine seal; but they existed before, and were found even among the Egyptians and Assyrians. What Christianity did for all these feelings was exactly what the creation of the sun, as given in the Mosaic account, did for the light then existing. There was light before, but the creation of the sun was the gathering all the scattered rays of light into one focus. Christian institutions, asylums, hospitals, are only the reduction into form of feelings that existed before.

So it is, that all that heathenism held of good and godlike, Christianity acknowledges and adopts—centralizes. It is human—Christian—ours.

2. Consider the degradation of this child's origin.

"This is one of the Hebrew's children." The exclusiveness of the Egyptian social system was as strong as that of the Hindoo. There was no intermixture between caste and caste—between priest and merchant. This child was, moreover, a Hebrew—a slave—an alien—reckoned an hereditary enemy, and to be crushed.

In these rigid feelings of caste distinction the princess was brought up. The voice of Society said, It is but a Hebrew. The mightier voice of nature—no, of God—spake within her, and said, It is a human being—bone of your bone, and sharing the same life.

That moment the princess of Egypt escaped from the trammels of

time-distinctions and temporary narrowness, and stood upon the rock of the Eternal. So long as the feeling lasted, she breathed the spirit of that Kingdom in which there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free." So long as the feeling lasted, she breathed the atmosphere of Him who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

She was animated by His spirit Who came to raise the abject, to break the bond of the oppressor. She felt as He felt, when she recognized that the very degradation of the child was a claim upon her royal compassion.

3. The last reason we find for this claim was its unprotected state:—it wept.

Those tears told of a conscious want—the felt want of a mother's arms. But they suggested to the Egyptian princess the remembrance of a danger of which the child was unconscious—helpless exposure to worse evils—famine; the Nile flood; the crocodile. And the want of which the exposed child was conscious was far less than the danger of which it was unconscious.

Such is the state of orphanage. Because it is unprotected, it is therefore exposed to terrible evils. There are worse evils than the Nile, the crocodile, or starvation.

Suppose the child had lived. Then, as a boy in the hands of a task-master or slave-driver, he would have become callous, hard, and vicious, with every feeling of tenderness dried up. Nothing can replace a parent's tenderness. It is not for physical support merely that parents are given us, but for the formation of the heart. He wept now; but the fountain of the orphan's tears would have been withered and dried up, and instead of the tender man which he afterwards became, he would have become a hardhearted slave.

Let us suppose again the case of a girl orphaned. Then you have the danger infinitely multiplied. There would have been no one in all the land of Egypt to redress the wrongs done to a Hebrew maiden. There are men in this world to whom, putting religion out of the question even, the very fact of wanting protection is cause sufficient for them to render protection. There are men to whom defencelessness is its own all-sufficient plea: there are men in whose presence the woman and the orphan, just because they are unshielded by any care, are protected more than they could be by any laws.

But remember, I pray you, that there is another spirit in the world—the spirit of oppression, and even worse; the spirit against which Jewish prophets rose to the height of a divine eloquence when they pleaded the cause of the fatherless and the widow; that spirit which in our own day makes the daughter of the poor man less safe than the daughter of the rich; that spirit of seduction, than which there is nothing more cowardly, more selfish, more damnable. For alas! it is

true that to say that a girl is unprotected, fatherless, and poor, is almost equivalent to saying that she will fall into sin.

II. We pass on now to consider the orphan's education; and first I notice that it was a suggestion from another.

The princess felt compassion, and so far was in the state of one who has warm feelings, but does not know how to do good. Brought up in a court, born to be waited on, nursed in luxury, ignorant of life and how the poor lived, those feelings might have remained helpless feelings.

Then, in the providence of God, one stood by who offered a suggestion how she might benefit the child, "Shall I go and call a nurse?" In other words, she suggested that it would be a princely and noble thing for Pharaoh's daughter to adopt and educate it.

And now observe the value of such a suggestion—what we want is not feeling—emotions are common, feelings super-abound. In the educated classes, feeling is extremely refined, but is much occupied with imaginary and unreal troubles: and the reason why, with such warm feelings so little good is done, is that we want the suggestion how to do it.

Observe how differently the Bible treats this from what the painter or the novelist would have done. A painter would have shown the majesty and beauty of the royal actor. A romance would have given a touching history of womanly sentiment. But the Bible, being a real book, says little of the emotion—merely mentions it—and passes on to the act to which the feeling was meant to lead.

Brethren, we often make a mistake here; we are proud of our emotions, of our refined feeling, of our quick sensibilities; but remember, I pray you, feeling by itself is worthless—it is meant to lead to action, and if it fails to do this, it is a danger rather than a blessing; for excited feeling that stops short of deeds is the precursor of callousness and hardness of heart. Your sensibility is well—but what has it *done*?

We feel the orphans' claims, and now comes the question, how shall we do them good?

Let us observe that Moses was nursed by a Hebrew matron. She was one of his own grade. It would have been a capital error to have given him to an Egyptian nurse. Probably, the princess left to herself would have done so. But then he would have been weaned from his own race. In heart, sympathies, feelings, he would have been an Egyptian. Nay, he would have been more exculsive; for the hardest are almost always those who have been raised above their former position. The slave's hardest taskmaster is a Negro. The one who is most exclusive in his sympathies is usually the raised merchant, or the one recently ennobled.

The great thing is to emancipate the degraded through their own class. Only through their own class can they be effectually delivered; the mere patronage of the great and rich injures character.

So it was with Judaism; so it was with Christianity. The Redeemer was made of a woman – “born under the law to redeem them that were under the law.” He Who came to preach the Gospel to the poor, was born of a poor woman.

But it was not only a Hebrew nurse to whom Moses was given, it was a mother – his own mother – who nursed him; and from her he heard the story of his people’s history. From her he learned to feel his country’s wrongs to be his own. In the splendour of Pharaoh’s court he never could forget that his mother was a slave, and that his father was working in brick and mortar, under cruel taskmasters.

From the princess he gained the wisdom of Egypt – he was taught legislative science. From hardship, he learned endurance and patience. Instruction ends in the school-room, but education ends only with life. A child is given to the universe to educate.

Now let us see the results of this training on his intellectual and moral nature.

1. Intellectually. We will only notice the spirit of inquiry and habit of observation. To ask “Why?” is the best Christian lesson for a child. Not the “*why*” which is the language of disobedience, but that “*why*” which demands for all phenomena a cause. It was this which led Moses on Mount Horeb to say, “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” So it was that Moses found out God.

2. In the moral part of his character we note his hatred of injustice and cruelty; ever was he found ranged against oppression in whatever form it might appear. He stood ever on the side of Right against Might, whether it was to avenge the wrong done by the Egyptian to one of his Hebrew brethren, or to rescue the daughter of the priest of Midian from the oppressing shepherds. He became, too, a peacemaker. Thus we get a glimpse of the moral and intellectual nature of the man who afterwards led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and who, but for the education he had received, might have become as degraded as any of the nation he freed from slavery.

At the present day, that child who might have become so degraded, stands second but to One in dignity and influence in the annals of the human race. Take for one example the Jewish Sabbath. Thousands upon thousands of that nation, fond of gain and mammon as they proverbially are said to be, yet gave up their gains yesterday, and voluntarily surrendered that one day in addition to this day which, by the law of the land, they are obliged to keep holy. And all this in obedience to the enactments of that orphan child, who three thousand years ago commanded the Sabbath-day to be kept holy. In those days the Pharaohs of Egypt raised their memorials in the enduring stone of the Pyramids, which still remain almost untouched by time. A princess of Egypt raised her memorial in a human spirit, and just so far as spirit is more enduring than stone, just so far is the work of that princess

more enduring than the work of the Pharaohs; for when the day comes when those Pyramids shall have crumbled into nothingness and ruin, then shall the spirit of the laws of Moses still remain interwoven with the most hallowed of human institutions. So long as the spirit of Moses influences this world, so long shall her work endure, the work of that royal-hearted lady who adopted this Hebrew orphan child.

It now only remains for me to say a word on the claims of that institution for which I am to plead to-day—the Female Orphan Asylum in this town. It was established in 1823, and for years its funds flourished; lately they have fallen off considerably, and that not in consequence of fault in the institution itself, but simply for this cause, that of those who took it up warmly once, many have been removed by death, and many have altered their place of residence, and also because many fresh calls and institutions have come forward, and thus have excluded this one. The consequence has been a sad falling off of funds. Last year the expenditure exceeded the receipts by one hundred pounds.

Within the walls of that institution, now almost dilapidated and falling into decay, there are twenty-four female orphan children, received from the age of six to sixteen; not educated above their station, but educated simply to enable them “to do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them.”

And now I earnestly desire to appeal to you for this object by the thoughts that have to-day been brought before you. Because they are children, I make an appeal to every mother’s and woman’s heart; because they are females, young and unprotected, I make an appeal to the heart of every man who knows and feels the evils of society; because they belong to the lowest class, I make an appeal to all who have ever felt the infinite preciousness of the fact that the Saviour of this world was born a poor man’s child.

My beloved Christian brethren, let us not be content with feeling; give, I pray you, as God has prospered you.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT F. W. ROBERTSON:

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